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ILLINOIS WOMEN IN THE CIVIL WAR

BY

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Chapter I

Early Day of the War.

Throughout the winter of 1860-61, while the country was waiting for the inauguration of the new President, Abraham Lincoln, the homely, unpolished, woodsman, surveyor and lawyer from Illinois, the situation between the northern and the southern states became more and more tense as one after another the southern states seceded from the Union. When on a beautiful Sabbath morning, April 14, 1861, the announcement of the fall of Fort Sumpter reached the people of Illinois as they were at services or, leaving their churches, there was a certain sense of relief that the uncertainty was ended even though it did mean war.

Immediately came Lincoln's Proclamation of War and the call for 75,000 volunteers. This was supplemented in Illinois by Governor Yates' call for six Regiments of volunteer militia to aid in the enforcement of the laws of the United States and to protect the public property.[1]

1. Illinois Journal, April, 1861, Springfield, Ills.

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Every town, village and hamlet became a recruiting station where men, under the leadership of Illinois' patriotic war Governor, Richard Yates, responded to the repeated calls for volunteers cheerfully and promptly throughout the whole four years of the war. Illinois troops took part in nearly every important battle in the Mississippi valley and in many of those of the East, besides accompanying Sherman in his triumphal "March to the Sea." Up to February, 1864, Illinois alone had answered every call upon her for troops without a draft. The whole number of enlistments from the State under the various calls from 1861 - 1865 were 255,057 to meet quotas aggregating 244,496.[2]

As men were volunteering, rallys were held throughout the State and loyal people were urged to fly their flags over their homes, offices and all public buildings. At a rally at the "Republican Wigwam" in Chicago, now called "National Hall", all in attendance, men, women and children repeated after Judge Manniere the oath, "I do solemnly swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will faithfully support the Constitution of the United States and the State of Illinois. So help me God."[3]

2. John Moses and Paul Selby. The White City, (Chicago, 1893), p. 99.
3. Mrs. Mary A. Livermore. My Story of the War,(Hartford, Conn. 1889), p. 85.

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The women stirred by the spirit of war and patriotism met in homes to make flags to be presented to their Company as it departed. At Decatur, Frank L. Hays was sent to St. Louis to buy silk for a flag for the regiment. Upon his return the women met at the parlors of Revere House where more than one hundred claimed the privilege of putting some stitches in the flag. So determined was every woman to have a hand in the work that no one was allowed to finish a star, in some instances each of the five points was finished by a different hand. Greatly envied were the few who knew how to run a sewing machine and thus contribute a long seam to the coveted work.[4]

As the first regiments left home the soldiers went without uniforms but every man wore strapped to his back a knapsack, blanket and canteen. Every wife and sweetheart had brought some gift to add to the burden on her lover's back. Some brought embroidered slippers; and one soldier was supplied with a gorgeous dressing gown. A number of girls had sat up nights to make convenient toilet cases, which were equipped with clothes brushes, hair brushes and tooth brushes, razors and strops and plenty of perfumed soap and toilet powders, to which they had also added a

4. Mrs. Jane Martin Johns. Personal Recollections, (Decatur, 1912), p. 142.

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good supply of thread, needles and buttons. No man refused anything, it mattered not how ridiculous or burdensome it was, it was the gift of love to take away the sting of death.[5]

As the husbands, brothers and sons enlist for the war and the volunteers leave for the battlefields, the reality of war begins to be felt and the women want to take some active part in helping to carry on the war. They feel that merely making flags to present to the regiments is not enough, so they ask what they can do to help and the answers which they receive vary but may be summed up in a part of the poem, "The Volunteer Mother.":

> Thus only can woman find her place
> In the ranks of the conquering host;
> By yielding her loved ones with quiet grace,
> And the smile that inspires them most.
>
> Crushing from them her woman's fear,
> Stifling her woman's sigh;
> Making them feel with her words of cheer,
> Tis glorious for truth to die."[6]

And the women rose to meet this need. They demanded that their men-folks enlist in the cause of an undivided country and in support of Lincoln. Mothers permitted their sons to enlist and bravely bade them goodbye, although it often

5. Mrs. Jane Martin Johns. Personal Recollections, (Decatur, 1912), p. 144.
6. Illinois Journal, May, 1861.

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meant taking away the support of the family as well as days of loneliness and fear and possible loss of the dear ones.

The men were astonished at the way women reacted to the new condition. They were used to pale, languid women of society, delicate by reason of high heels, long heavy skirts, crinoline and diabolical corsets. The war awakened American women from their lady-like futility to the necessity of doing their own housework and later of earning their living in occupations usually undertaken by men. They found solace for the agony and uncertainty of war in work on the farm, in the counting house, and in offices.[7] New fields were open to them in politics. Women of education read the newspapers and the war bulletins and told their sisters of the news and explained its meaning. They found it necessary to call and preside over public meetings and elect officers for them from their own members. Thus faced with the real problems of life, women learned to despise frivolity, gossip, fashions and idleness and by proving woman's fitness for public service did much to advance the rights of women.[8]

Throughout all of April the Chicago women met in

7. Arthur W. Calhoun. A Social History of the American Family. 3 Vols., (Cleveland, 1918), II, p. 359.
8. Phoebe A. Hanaford. Women of the Century, (Boston, 1883), p. 167.

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rallies. The first work which they felt was necessary was to prepare for the care of the sick and wounded soldiers, so they began to make lint and bandages, working in church meetings, in private homes and individually. They were almost immediately faced with discouragement from medical men who told them it was a waste of time to make lint when it could be purchased so cheaply, and that it would be better to send the cloth in bulk than to make it into bandages. The women kept on with their work, however, because they did not have the money to give for the purchase of lint but had time and hands to work.[9]

In groups the women raised money to buy flags for the troops. On April 24, a group of ladies at Tremont House appointed a committee of twelve women to raise funds for the purchase of the Flag of the Thirty Four States to be presented to the newly formed "Irish Brigade." Although the women raised the money they were so unused to buying that they appointed a committee of three men to purchase the flag for them.[10]

The government in 1861 was not prepared for war and had no uniforms to give to its newly enlisted army, its only method of securing these would be from tailors putting out

9. The Chicago Tribune. April 26, 1861., Chicago, Illinois.
10. Ibid., April 24, 1861.

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suits slowly and with great expense. So the women all over the country asked to make the uniforms. In Chicago the ladies met to talk over the possibilities of establishing a sewing room. Mr. McVicker offered them the use of the room over McVicker's Theatre and they gladly accepted it, sewing machine companies donated the machines and then women were urged to come to this room which "Will accomodate forty sewing machines, is well lighted, but one flight of stairs from the street and the Star Spangled Banner floats over it," to give of their time to help provide uniforms for the soldiers.[11] They outfit the Irish Brigade and in June the ladies are invited to visit the barracks of the Brigade and transportation is furnished them free of charge.

The ladies at McVicker's continued their sewing, doing whatever was suggested to them, sending out hundreds of articles of clothing to the troops, havelocks, blankets, pillows and hospital supplies. Materials for these supplies were donated and solicited in any way possible. Some one even suggested, after the funeral of Stephen A. Douglas, that the white cloth which had helped to form the display of mourning be sent to the hall to be made into necessary articles for the hospital.[12]

11. The Chicago Tribune. April, 30, 1861.
12. Ibid., June, 14, 1861.

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While the women of Chicago were thus doing their best throughout the early months of the war, the women of the rural parts of Illinois were no less busy although their activities were less completely recorded. The mothers of Sandwich furnished each soldier with a copy of the eight cent Testament of the American Bible Society, with the request that they be constantly worn in their woolen shirt pocket and that each man put his name and post office address in his own Bible, then if they fell in battle information could be sent at once to their several post offices. The ladies of De Kalb supplied their soldiers with blankets and a splendid flag; at Dwight and many other towns the ladies presented their Company with a stand of colors. These flags were usually given at public rallies and the presentation was made by the most popular young lady of the town. Both Dwight and Ottawa prepared clothing and equipment for their troops. All day Sunday and Monday April 21 and 22, the Rockford tailors and more than three hundred Rockford women worked to make uniforms for Captain Weiner's Company of Zouaves who were thus able to leave for Springfield, April 24, completely uniformed.[13]

13. The Chicago Tribune. April 25, 1861.

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Patriotism is shown in the schools also. The Ladies Seminary at Rockford aided in making the uniforms for the Rockford Company. They also, with their own hands, made a silk flag which floated from the cupola of the main Seminary building. The ladies of Dearborn Seminary, Chicago, presented the Cadets of Chicago University with a stand of colors. The teachers and students of Illinois Normal University raised a regiment and money for a stand of colors for them was raised at the Teacher's Institute which met at the High School in Chicago in September, 1861.[14]

In Southern Illinois nearer the scene of battle the work of the women took on a different aspect. At Camp Harden, Villa Ridge, the ladies of the neighborhood took sick soldiers into their own homes and supplied luxuries and fresh flowers for those in the hospitals. At Springfield, the women provided soups and dainties and cared for the sick and wounded and provided them with clothing.[15]

So the women worked with very little encouragement, much to dampen their ardor but doing work which is a real aid. Considering the little which they had done in public work and their great ignorance of military matters their mistakes were remarkably few although they were extremely

14. The Chicago Tribune. September 16, 1861.
15. Ibid., September 4, 1861.

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amusing. The idea of making "needle-books" for the soldiers appealed to many sentimental young ladies and the soldiers were soon deluged with the "beautiful little humbugs" which were bountifully equipped with assorted needles, thread, buttons of various sizes and yarn so that the men might repair their clothing that would otherwise be thrown away.[16] The women were so zealous in making lint and bandages that soon there was such an accumulation of it that it was necessary to halt its production.[17]

The "Havelock Fever" preceeded this "mania." It was summer and the army was to move southward, to the torrid heats. A newspaper recalled the services of General Havelock for the British troops in India. He had devised a white linen head-dress to be worn over the caps of his men to defend them from sun-stroke. Inexperienced ladies began to issue orders for making such havelocks and they were turned out by the thousands; of all patterns, sizes, and materials. While the havelock fever was at its height the 49th Illinois, commanded by Colonel Turchin, was mustered in and ordered to rendezvous at Camp Douglas. A detachment of the "Cake and Pie Brigade", women laden with indigestible dainties, paid the regiment an early visit and

16. United States Sanitary Commission Bulletins. Philadelphia 1864, p. 760.
17 Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 121.

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were received by the men, who were not under drill, "en Havelock." As the sturdy fellows emerged from their tents all wearing the white havelocks as nightcaps, turbans, sunbonnets, bandages or sunshades, their appearance was so ludicrous that a shout went up from officers, soldiers and lady visitors, and no more time nor money was wasted in the useless manufacture of havelocks.[13]

During the first year of the war most of the hospital supplies, the clothing and food was sent to individual soldiers or companies by their own mothers and by groups of women in the towns. These women unused to packing goods put bandages, canned fruits, jam, marmalade, clothing, books, stationary and comfort bags all in together and freighted the package to their boys. Frequently, the fruits fermented and spoiled the contents of the package or the regiment had been ordered on, no one knew just where, the boy for whom the box was intended could not be located so that car-loads of supplies were spoiled or undelivered or both and simply had to be dumped into the river or thrown out along the railroad track so that the cars might be made available for shipping. This did not check the efforts of the women at home but led to a knowledge and a

18. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 112.

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necessity of wiser methods of aiding the soldiers from which the organized work developed.[19]

19. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 121.

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Chapter II

The Northwestern Sanitary Commission

For almost a year after the war began the women of Illinois worked in relief circles for the benefit of the local regiments. In Chicago, there were a dozen or more such groups formed mostly within the churches. About the middle of September these women began to agitate the need of an organized Sanitary Commission in Chicago similar to the one already functioning in Cleveland. At the same time the United States Sanitary Commission which was organized April 25, 1861, appealed to the women of the country to organize so that the contributions might go to the Sanitary Commission; then the agent of the Commission could act as an agent of the Government to supply the soldiers with such things as the Government was unable to provide.

The United States Sanitary Commission under the Secretary of War, appointed Dr. D. Brainard, Honorable I. N. Arnold, and Colonel J. W. Foster as the Sub-committee for Chicago. They collected from private sources the

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comforts and delicacies needed for the troops at Cairo. These men did not have time to continue the work so a meeting was called at Tremont House and a Committee of seven men was appointed to constitute the Sanitary Commission of Chicago, which began work October 17, 1861, with Mark Skinner as President and a plan to meet three times a week for about an hour to transact all Sanitary business.[1]

With the approach of winter 1861 and 1862 a circular to the women of the northwest was issued which appealing to their patriotism, asked for immediate relief for the sick and wounded soldiers and told what the soldier's needs were. The circular also urged the organization of relief circles which would be contributory to the Chicago Bureau.[2]

The Commission room was located on Wabash Avenue and the window shades bore the motto, "Supplies for our sick and wounded soldiers" and the signature "Depot of the Chicago Sanitary Commission."

In organizing the Sanitary Commission the Government gave it only the powers of "Inquiry and advice." In the first months of the war the women worked to prepare clothes and comforts for the sick and wounded soldiers. Supplies

1. The Chicago Tribune. September 19, 1861.
2. Ibid., November 9, 1861.

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and inquiries began to pour into the rooms and women took over the responsibility for most of the work. Mrs. Jeremiah Porter was made directress of the rooms and she worked there daily from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon telling the women what to do. Gradually, the work expanded along various lines. The station became a center where mothers and wives received news of the battles; mourning friends came there for sympathy; those wishing to go to the battle-field to sick or wounded relatives came here for help in securing passes. If Mrs. Porter could get passes she tried to tell the women who were unused to travel under ordinary conditions how to use them, and if the pass could not be secured she tried to explain the reason. All letters and telegrams to the Depot had to be opened, answered and a complete record kept of them; every box received had to be opened, the contents sorted and labeled with the Commission letters and a voucher returned to the Aid Society or the individuals who had sent the supplies or money.[3] The work here was tremendous, especially for women used only to the management of households, but it was soon recognized as efficient. Surgeon A. J. Crain in thanking the Commission for articles

3. Mrs. Sarah Edwards Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, (Chicago, 1868), p. 40.

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he had received from them commends them for their dependability.

In the Spring of 1862, one hundred and thirty-five packages of supplies were sent under the direction of Mr. Goodsmith, to the army at Pittsburg Landing. During the dark, discouraging days from July 1862, to January 1863, when the troops were being driven back and when President Lincoln in July called for 300,000 more men, the supplies of the Commission were low, contributions were less and complaints were loud and frequent. Some Aid Societies worked on through all the discouragements, but others sent letters expressing their doubt.

One letter said, "Some refuse to give, fearing everything is given up indiscriminately to surgeons and nurses. Others fear, or pretend to fear, that Chicago regiments take precedence in everything that is nice." Others wrote that "soldiers tell us that the sick do not, and will not, get the things, if we send them." Others had been told that goods from the Sanitary Commission were sold to the soldiers. The Commission investigated charges of this sort and found them unfounded. In one hospital Mrs. Porter found a soldier lying in sheets bearing the Sanitary Commission Stamp, using pillow slips, drawers, shirts and socks also stamped by the Commission. He thought that they

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were all from Uncle Sam and had written home that the Commission was doing nothing for him.[4]

An interesting bit of work done by the Commission throughout the war but especially in 1863, was the campaign against scurvy. The food supply of the army was so irregular and contained so few vegetables that in the spring of 1863 there was an epidemic of scurvy in the army. Appeals poured into the Commission for anti-scorbutics for the army of the Cumberland. On March 4, 1863, the Chicago Commission issued a circular throughout the Northwest asking for aid and even telegraphed the following message to many of the larger aid societies, "Rush forward anti-scorbutics for General Grant's army." In spite of the rain and mud of March, committees went throughout the country in wagons, collecting vegetables by the bushels, pecks, quarts and handsful. Then "pickling meetings" were held by many aid socieites to make barrels and kegs of sauer-kraut, while the "grating committee" amid much rallying and with many tears, was courageously working at the horse-radish.[5] During March, potatoes, onions, sauer-kraut and pickles rolled across the Illinois Central

4. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, pp. 75 - 83.
5. Ibid., p. 116.

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Railroad down the Mississippi at the average of one thousand barrels weekly. In relieving the scurvy of the army of Chattanooga the greatest shipments of vegetables came from Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin. Dixboro, Michigan in three days prepared between ten or eleven tons of pickled onions and potatoes for the army.[6]

After the Great Sanitary Fair of Chicago in 1863 the name of the Chicago Sanitary Commission was changed to the Northwestern Sanitary Commission due to the cooperation the Chicago women received from all of the Northwest. Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Livermore were the most important leaders in the work now. They spent much time traveling about, urging the establishment of Aid Societies, visiting hospitals at the front and thus bringing the women at home into closer touch with the men at the front. By 1864, the work had branched out and included the establishment of Lodges, Homes and Rests; the making of a Hospital directory which listed all the men who were sick, wounded or who had died, in each Hospital, giving the name and company to which they belonged. This enabled many families to locate their relatives whom they had thought lost through the confusion of the war.

6. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 233.

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With the close of the year 1864, and the beginning of 1865, when the feeling that the war was about to end became more general, a new department was opened by the Commission, that of a Bureau of Information and Employment whose object was to aid those who had served honorably, in finding employment, to prevent the necessity of charitable institutions, to lessen pauperism and crime and to save the country a large amount of productive labor. The Commission further met the needs of the disbanding army by providing suitable clothing for the soldiers, giving medical attention to many and supplying fresh vegetables for those having scurvy tendencies. The Claim Agencies and Pension Pay Agency were run without charge to the soldier, wife, or mother, and were valuable in helping secure back pay and pensions overdue.[7]

With the close of the war the United States Sanitary Commission announced the work in the East as substantially done and announced to the Branches and Aid Socieites, "The supply work is over and the characteristic labors of the women of the land, in furnishing hospital clothing and comforts for the sick and wounded soldiers are complete."

7. Sanitary Commission Bulletin, (Washington, 1865), pp. 1221 - 1235.

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The Commission pays tribute to the women, "expressing the gratitude of the Board for their patient, humane, and laborious devotion to our common work. It is not too much to say, that the Army of Women at home has fully matched in patriotism and in sacrifices the Army of men in the field."[8]

November 30, 1865, the last entry was made in the Record Book of the Northwestern Sanitary Commission. This finished the work of the Branch and the office was closed thereafter. Over 3,000 Aid Societies from Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana had been tributory to it. Added to these societies to form the army at home were all the women who went to help after battles, the men who gave money and gifts in kind, the children, the clergy, the Press which printed gratuitously for the Aid Societies and the Railroad authorities who generously gave travelling passes and freighted supplies free of charge. In all the contributions received from Illinois were:

1861 - 62	$15,648.61
1863	121,385.92
1864	26,840.09
1865	3,342.54
Total	$ 167,117.16

8. Sanitary Commission Bulletin, (Washington, 1865), p. 1249.

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On every large battle-field the Commission spent from $25,000 to $75,000, and every wounded soldier cost from $3.20 to $10.80 to care for depending on the injuries each had received.[9]

9. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 339.

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Chapter III

Women of the Sanitary Commission.

The women of northern Illinois worked largely through the Chicago - later the Northwestern - Sanitary Commission. Miss Elizabeth Blaikie and Miss Elizabeth Hawley were among the first attendants at the Chicago Sanitary rooms. From the Aid Societies of the State, Mrs. Sarah E. Henshaw, Secretary of the Ottawa Society was important, and she also later wrote a history of the Commission. The Secretary of the Peoria Branch, Miss Mary E. Bartlett, was indefatigable in her exertions for raising supplies for the soldiers from the beginning to the close of the war.[1] One of the most efficient of the tributaries was the Freeport society with Mrs. M. M. Sheety, the Secretary, a most valuable correspondent. Mrs. James C. Hoge and Mrs. Mary A. Livermore were especially valuable to the Commission because of their executive talent, surpassing ability, powers of endurance and indomitable energy. They and Mrs.

1. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 136.

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Colt visited the army to see what the conditions in the hospitals were. They were often invited to Aid Societies to speak and wherever they were called they were received with ovations. Mrs. Henshaw said their visits were like those of a bishop in his diocese. She says, "I suppose Mrs. Hoge is away, confirming the Aid Society," and "What happy women are now enjoying Mrs. Livermore's apostolical ministrations."[2]

Mrs. Mary Ashton Rice Livermore came to Chicago with her husband in 1857. At the Chicago Wigwam in the Republican Convention of 1860, Mrs. Livermore was the only woman reporter assigned among one hundred or more men reporters. With the proclamation of war Mrs. Livermore resigned all of her work except writing for her husband's paper, hired a governess for her children and became identified with war relief work. Through the columns of her husband's newspaper she appealed to the patriotism of the people. In an article published soon after the fall of Fort Sumpter, she commented favorably on the conduct of the women. She praises them for the way they have been "lopping off superfluities, retrenching expenditures," and "deaf to the calls of pleasure," they have been "swept by

2. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 206.

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the incoming patriotism of the time to the loftiest height of womanhood." She says, "the riven fetters of caste and conventionality have dropped at their feet, and they sit together patrician and plebian, Catholic and Protestant, and make garments for the poorly clad soldiery."[3]

Working with Mrs. Hoge, Mrs. Livermore organized and encouraged aid societies. They set the standard for each society as one box of hospital supplies from each society every month. They prepared the circulars, bulletins, and monthly papers of the Commission. Mrs. Livermore looked after the printing and distribution of the army pamphlets on preserving health in camp and emergency treatments.[4] In the early days of the war they were very busy collecting, purchasing, cutting, making and packing whatever was in demand when "battle supplies" were needed. Then as a lull came after battles, they were sent to hospitals and medical headquarters to obtain information in regard to the needs.

After Fort Donelson, Governor Yates gave Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Livermore letters of recommendation to visit the hospitals. They were there for two or three weeks and Mrs. Livermore later said she could not recall a single

3. Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. Our Famous Women, (Hartford, Conn., 1884), p. 397.
4. Mrs. John A. Logan, The Part taken by Women, (Wilmington, Del., 1912), p. 325.

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cheerful or humorous event. In their visits to the front they personally visited and administered to more than one hundred thousand men in the hospitals.[5]

In November, 1862, they were sent as delegates from Chicago to the United States Sanitary Commission Council which met at Washington, D.C. While there they visited Miss Dix whom they thought too slight and delicate looking for the work she was doing.[6]

Mrs. Livermore had a peculiar magnetism, sparkle and attractiveness that won all who first beheld her. Her voice and intonation were charming, her imagination active, her perceptions keen and her mind rapid so that she was very popular as a speaker. Her first speech was given at Dubuque, Iowa. She was called here to speak and expected to cross the river by ferry, but found that the ice was so bad the ferry was not running. Mrs. Livermore knew she must get over so she convinced two men who were going over in a rowboat to let her ride with them. She had expected to talk informally to a few people, but on arriving, found such a great crowd assembled that she was appalled and asked Colonel Stone to speak in her place. The Colonel told her if she did not speak they would lose Iowa to the Commission.

5. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 159.
6. Ibid., p. 233.

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So she gave her first speech, telling the people of the needs of the soldiers and their sickness and suffering. Following her talk the Governor appealed to the people and $8,000 was contributed, five hundred bushels of potatoes, besides many bushels of onions and anti-scorbutics. At this time the plans for the Iowa Sanitary Fair were also started.[7]

After her Dubuque speech, Mrs. Livermore went to hundreds of towns telling of the soldiers. During the summer of 1864, she traveled in Iowa, riding over hundreds of miles of prairie to bring the Iowa Aid Societies into the Northwest Sanitary Commission, and influencing the members of the legislature and the Governor, himself, to encourage relief work in Iowa.[8]

Mrs. Livermore's knowledge of the hospitals was first hand. In company with Mrs. Colt, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Throop she visited Grant's army. In a letter to Judge Skinner she says, "Mrs. Colt and I are afraid you will think we do not amount to anything but we see nothing to find fault with." At Memphis, however, she found an officer's hospital which excited her sympathies. All during the war there was a

7. Grace Humphrey. Women in American History, (Indianapolis, 1919), p. 176.
8. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 258.

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prejudice against the surgeons, nurses and officers that they would receive better care than the regular army men. Mrs. Livermore wrote, "I visited the officer's hospital today, and conversed with every man in it - over one hundred. Their poverty is pitiable, but none of them complain, and they express satisfaction that the privates are better cared for in the hospitals than they are."[9] At Young's Point, Mrs. Livermore appealed to General Grant in behalf of twenty-one sick soldiers who had been pronounced incurable. She asked that they might be discharged from the army and that she might be allowed to take them north to their homes to die. The next day after, she sent in her request, an officer brings her the discharges for all of these men. Mrs. Livermore had them taken to a Sanitary boat; one died at Memphis, another, whose home was in Wisconsin died at Chicago, but the rest were all able to reach their homes.[10]

At Fort Pickering Mrs. Livermore found three orphans, Jenny, who was trying to take care of baby and the middle sister. She brought them to the Chicago Home of the Friendless, and as manager there found an Iowa couple who adopted them. She finds a little negro boy whose mother

9. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 128.
10. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 314.

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has gotton to Chicago but was unable to take him. Although the Black Laws were very strictly enforced in Egypt, Mrs. Livermore takes him on the train with her, conceals him when the cars are searched at Cairo, and is able to hand him over to his mother in Chicago.[11]

Secretary Stanton ordered that Mrs. Livermore have the power to detail women nurses for the hospitals and accompany them to their posts. Mrs. Livermore was active in beginning some forty Soldier's Lodgings, in helping with the pension agency, the back pay agency, and in completing the hospital directory. With the close of the war she continues her active public work and by 1869 she is one of the women instrumental in organizing the American Women Suffrage Association.[12]

When Mrs. Jane C. Hoge's two sons enlisted in the army she gave her time to work to aid them. She developed a remarkable ability for conducting a public meeting. She had a force, power and weight that bore all before her. Her language was picturesque, her perosnal appearance dignified and her influence strong and not easily set aside.[13]

11. Livermore. My Story of the War, pp. 360 - 362.
12. Frances E. Willard, Occupation For Women, (New York, 1892), p. 194.
13. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, P. 206.

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In June 1863, she tells of her visit to the Gayoso Block Hospital of which Mrs. Bickerdyke was matron. She writes, "I come to watch if you get your rights and go back to tell the truth; and they gather in crowds to hear me and weep alike - men and women - and would fain sit all night and hear how the soldiers look and what they say, and how they feel and what they think." She continues, "Boys, if I could not tell them all about you, they would turn me out of Freeport, Ottawa, Lyons, and Joliet, and any other place I go, for they work by day for you, and dream of you by night. If they want a good time, they have it for the boys and if they have a prayer meeting, they pray for the boys."[14]

Mrs. O. E. Hosmer also had two sons in the army. She with Mrs. Smith Tinkham worked from Chicago. Early in the winter of 1862, Mrs. Hosmer went to Tipton and Smithtown, Missouri, where she found the conditions of the hospital wretched; through her efforts supplies were sent to them from St, Louis. After the battle of Murfreesboro in which the Chicago Board of Trade Regiment fought, the Board of Trade Committee sent Mrs. Hosmer snd Mrs. Tinkham to visit the hospitals. They went to Louisville without much difficulty but found the trip from there to Lebanon and on

14. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 136.

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to Nowlin Station very difficult. At Nowlin they aided the soldiers they found there and then pushed on to Murfreesboro. They bagan work here at once with their first duty to learn the names and location of all of the men of the Board of Trade regiment, visiting and sympathizing with them. The surgeons gave them free access to the hospital and left the distribution and treatment of the sick in regard to their diet, entirely to the judgment of these two women. They secured a cook-house near the hospital, selected and impressed all the conveniences necessary from the homes of the secesh, and worked from nine every morning until evening to provide food for the several hundred sick soldiers. The nurses distributed soup and Mrs. Hosmer and Mrs. Tinkham took such other food as the condition of the patients required. They were aided in securing supplies by having access to those of the Sanitary Commission. Mrs. Hosmer and Mrs. Tinkham worked so hard at Murfreesboro that they were compelled to give up their work and return north to recover their health.[15]

15. The Chicago Tribune. 1863.

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Chapter IV

Religious Work For The Soldiers.

As the boys of the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association enlisted, those remaining behind provided the Scriptures and other religious reading for their soldiers and sent agents to the field with supplies. From the desire to look after the religious interests of the boys developed the United States Christian Commission which was founded by the Young Men's Christian Association, on November 15, 1861, with its special duty to "take measures to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of the soldiers, sailors and marines, in cooperation with the chaplains." It was to "carry home comforts to the homeless, friendly counsels to the friendless, and the gospel message to the Christless." It urged all religious organizations to cooperate with the Commission in its work and appealed to the Government to "provide tents or accomodations suitable for religious services."[1]

1. Reverend Lemuel Moss. Annals of the United States Christian Commission, (Philadelphia, 1868).

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George H. Stuart, Chairman of the Christian Commission wrote to President Lincoln asking for his approval of the proposed work. Lincoln replied in December 1861 giving his approval saying, "your Christian and benevolent undertaking for the benefit of the soldiers is too obviously proper and praiseworthy to admit any difference of opinion. I sincerely hope your plan may be as successful in execution as it is just and generous in conception."[2]

For some eight or nine months the Commission accomplished little, the public was indifferent to it, the religious press did not support it, and the army chaplains and surgeons were unwilling to work with the agents sent out. By the early part of 1862 the agents had proved their value and the Commission became one of the important relief agents for the army.

In October 1861, Chicago sent her first agent to the field, Mr. D. L. Moody. At first the agents were men whose duty it was to hold religious meetings with the soldiers and sailors, give out Bibles, tracts, bound books, hymn books, papers, magazines or any reading material that they had. Very soon lady delegates and missionaries were sent out as attendants in the reading rooms and visitors in the

2. Northwestern Christian Advocate. November 30, 1864, Chicago, Illinois.

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hospitals to do whatever their quick sympathy and ready hand found to do for the bodily and spiritual comfort of the men. At St. Louis, a number of earnest, self-denying ladies were enlisted. Some of them working in the barracks and hospitals near the city. In their work the women soon found that it was necessary to bind up the wounds, bathe the tired bodies, refresh them with food and give a little motherly sympathy or advice before the boys would listen to religious tracts or read Bibles.

Something of the service rendered by these ladies and of their method of dealing with the men may be gathered from the following extract from the journal of Miss Sue McBeth:

"No. 1., Schofield Barracks is a transportation depot for going South, or returning home on furlough. One day it is crowded, the next, almost empty. All classes of men are for a time brought here.

"We have about the hardest men in our hospital that you can find anywhere;" said the Commanding Officer, one November afternoon when Mrs. M. - and I went to see if he would not appropriate to us a room for commission purposes, wherein to store our library, stationary etc.

"We've been up stairs all afternoon, and haven't yet found any hard cases."

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"Of course, they wouldn't behave badly before you." He was very kind, promised us the room and allowed the men afterwards to go across the street to prayer meetings, and very precious hours were some of these."[3]

As a religious organization the Christian Commission wanted first of all to lead the soldiers to Christ and the delegates were devout men and women to whom religion was very real. Miss McBeth tells of another incident in her work:

"I noticed two strangers coming into the ward. One of them belonged to the 176th Illinois, a regiment just discharged and going home, but this man, too sick to proceed had got a comrade to stay with him.

"I've been wanting so much to see you again," he said when I spoke to him:

"Why, did you ever see me before?"

"Yes, in Ward 1, Benton Barracks. Dont you remember, I was the one, you said, who was taking jaundice;

I could not remember him; but he went on: "I've been thinking so much of what you said then, and I wanted to see you again to tell you. You remember I said something about

3. Rev. Edward P. Smith. Incidents of the United States Christian Commission, (Philadelphia, 1869), p. 445.

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getting ready to die; and you said you didn't believe in that, - it wasn't the right thing to do; I ought to 'get ready to live'; I owed my life to God, and it was not right to keep it back from Him; I ought to present my body a living sacrifice to God, which was my reasonable service, instead of turning to Him at the last moment, so as to get to Heaven."

"And did you do so?"

"Yes, I think I did," he answered earnestly.[4]

The Commission established log churches with canvas roofs or chapel tents on the various battle-fields. Here sermons were delivered and prayer-meetings held, writing paper and envelopes were given out and the delegates wrote letters for the soldiers who were unable to write their own. One day at the Memphis room, a group of soldiers at one end of the room were making chairs, while another group at the opposite side was conducting a singing school; at the tables the soldiers were writing home. At three o'clock all the work was dropped for a half hour of prayer. The tools were taken up again at three-thirty and at five the chairs were finished so that the next day the worshipers would be able to be seated during prayer-meeting.[5]

4. Smith. Incidents of the United States Christian Commission. p. 446.
5. Northwestern Christian Advocate. February 3, 1864.

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When Mr. B. F. Jacobs, Secretary of the Chicago Board of the Commission was lecturing in Milwaukee a lady comes up to thank him. She told him: "My only son died in the hospital at Memphis. I was too poor to go and see my boy, after the letter came telling me that he was sick. But a lady delegate of the Commission visited him daily in the hospital, ministered to his wants, comforted him in his loneliness and above all led him to Jesus. When he was dead, the same lady cut off a lock of his hair and sent it to me in a letter, with his dying words. She was a mother to my boy. And as long as I live, while the Christian Commission lasts, I want to pray for God's blessing upon all who love it and work for it."[6]

The Commission established a system of loan libraries which were valuable in supplying the soldiers with reading matter. They also employed a number of experienced teachers for each regiment of colored troops in the 25th Corp and provided tables, primers, spelling books, writing books, black boards, slates, pens and ink for these soldiers, whom they found eager to learn.[7] Supplementing and aiding in providing reading matter, the American Bible

6. Smith. Incidents of the United States Christian Commission, p. 479.
7. Moss. Annals of the United States Christian Commission, p. 676.

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Society functioned in all the hospitals and camps of the country. It appealed to the country to send in any reading matter, especially Bibles ans religious tracts for distribution to the army. In the year ending March 31, 1864, the Illinois Bible Society gave twenty thousand Bibles to the soldiers, prisoners, and sailors. A Chicago lady from the First Baptist Church sent a box of tracts and Bibles to St. Louis for the Normal Regiment. Months later a soldier met this woman in Chicago and told how a dying comrade had said, "If you survive this war and get back to Chicago, I want you to go to the First Baptist Church in that city and thank that kind lady who sent us that box of Bibles."[8]

The greatest contribution of the Commission to relief work was the establishment of Diet Kitchens. The delegates found the hospitals so poorly equipped and supplied that they were failing to provide the sick soldiers with the proper diets needed for each case. Miss Annie Wittenmeyer, of Wisconsin, was the leader in founding these kitchens. She was given special permission by President Lincoln for transportation and passage to any of the armies. In all between fifty and sixty diet kitchens were put in operation

8. The Chicago Tribune. August 2, 1862.

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with over one hundred ladies engaged in their management. These women were paid only a nominal sum and very often that was spent to provide some articles of food needed in the hospitals.[9]

The Christian Commission was financed almost entirely by the free-will offering of the Christian public. The Commission did not encourage the use of Fairs and similar expedients for raising money but depended on public meetings emphasizing the fact that this organization gave an opportunity for the church to help evangelize the army and also aid in its temporal needs. The public was found a bit dulled to the opportunity presented and occasionally needed an extra prod, as is shown in this appeal which was in the Northwestern Christian Advocate for April 6, 1864:

"Christian men and women, you will remember the many thousands of brave boys who stood between you and the haughty and exacting foe, you will remember them or God may forget you."[10]

The work at Cairo, started by Chicago, was taken over by the Peoria Commission in 1865 and later in the same year by the St. Louis branch. In June, 1866, the work at Fort

9. Moss. Annals of the United States Christian Commission, pp. 665 - 670.
10. Northwestern Christian Advocate, April 6, 1864.

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Leavenworth was finished and in 1866 the last of the Commission work was completed when Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Porter returned from their work in Texas. To all of the returning soldiers the Commission gave two books, one, "Mustered Out" by Rev. Dr. E. N. Kirk, and the other "Parting Words" by Charles E. Lex. As the last link between the work in the army and the return to normal, the Commission worked with the Sanitary Commission in an Employment bureau. In this work it placed some one thousand four hundred men in positions.[11]

At the final meeting of the Executive Committee held in Washington, February 16, 1866, the following resolution was adopted:

"To the loyal women who, in Ladies Christian Commissions, in leagues and aid societies, have fed the flame of piety and patriotism in our homes, and in weary hours, for successive years, with busy fingers and devices of love, have kept the hands of our Agents and Delegates in the field so full of comforts for suffering patriots, it is not enough to say we are profoundly grateful. To them, under God, the Commission owes its success. We only anticipate the verdict of the future, when we say that, thus far in

11. Moss. Annals of the United States Christian Commission, p. 308.

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human history, such work is exclusively theirs, - a work that could have been wrought only by praying wives and mothers and sisters in behalf of imperilled kindred and country."[12]

12. Moss. Annals of the United States Christian Commission, p. 233.

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Chapter V

Illinois State Sanitary Commission.

The third organization functioning in Illinois for her soldiers was the Illinois State Sanitary Commission. So many appeals came in to Governor Yates for help in caring for the soldiers that in his message to the House he says that on August 20, 1862, "I established an agency, in the nature of a State Sanitary Bureau, and directed the State Commissary General to take charge of this department, to whom all communications and packages should be addressed," and he appointed Colonel John Williams of Springfield General Sanitary Agent of the State. The Bureau sent out agents to take food supplies and cheer, and to visit the hospitals and aid the soldiers.[1] The Bureau sent circulars throughout the State soliciting aid and telling the people what things were needed. The response was immediate and boxes and barrels and packages poured into the State Bureau as they did to the other two Commissions, with a natural

1. Journal of the House of Representatives of the 23rd General Assembly of the State of Illinois, Springfield, 1865, p. 50.

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tendency for each Aid Society to send its supplies to the Northwestern Commission if they lived near Chicago, to the State Bureau if they were in the central part of the State or to the Christian Commission knowing that all goods sent would be well used whichever agency distributed it.

In September, 1863, the State Bureau was reorganized as a Commission so that it might have more directors and be able to carry on the increased amount of work. In the reports of the Commission the Secretary, John R. Wood recognized the women's part in the Commission thus: " To close this report without awarding that meed of praise to which they are so richly entitled, would be doing gross injustice to the noble, the generous, the patriotic, the large-hearted and willing-handed women of Illinois. Their sincere devotion to the cause, their energetic and persevering cooperation in every measure that contemplated the improvement of the condition of the sick and suffering soldiers, their encouraging and hopeful letters, their prompt responses to all our calls for supplies have enabled our Commission to prosecute its great mission of benevolence, with a vigor and efficiency wholly unanticipated at the outset."[2]

2. Report to the General Assembly of Illinois at its 24th Session, 2 Vols., Springfield, 1865, p. 444. II.

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The greatest service to the Commission and that best known came in the donations from the aid societies established at the little country churches, or halls or school houses, where every woman of the neighborhood came to help sew, took care of the farm and raised what she could. Then she and the children went without food to cheerfully and quietly donate some dried fruit or marmelade, a bushel of potatoes or a few onions. The contributions of these groups tell the story of privation and economies which made them possible and show the patriotism and loyalty of the little groups who sent the food and supplies.

From December 19, 1862, to September 12, 1863, the total amount of money received by the Illinois Commission was $28,746.00. A few towns contributed supplies as follows and show the kind of supplies which came in from each little society:

Atlanta - Soldiers Aid Society -

93 shirts
33 pairs drawers
16 pairs socks
76 handkerchiefs
8 dressing gowns
7 coats
5 pillows
22 pillow cases
2 comforts
14 sheets
4 sacks dried fruit
22 pkg. dried fruit.
68 towels
1 lot napkins
1 pkg. cloth and lint
80 rolls bandages
6 bu. potatoes
2 pkg. pins
2 books
8 cans canned fruit
4 magazines
6 papers

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Huntley's Station - Soldiers' Aid Society -

13 shirts
1 pr. drawers
2 pr. socks
4 pillows
12 towels
20 lbs. dried fruit
1 paper cinnemon
1 paper mustard
1 lb. corn starch
5 combs
4 lbs. soap

Palatine - Citizens of Cook County -

6 boxes and 5 barrels vegetables sent to Cairo

Pekin - Soldiers' Aid Society -

3 shirts
1 pr. drawers
4 pillows
10 pads
4 pillow cases
90 lbs. dried fruit
24 boxes yeast powder
3 bottles catsup
1 bottle pickles
1 bottle horse-radish
1 lot soap
1 box reading matter
3 qts. wine
1 kettle

Forreston - Soldiers' Aid Society -

1 box dried fruit, butter, clothing, etc., valued at $100
2 bottles preserves
14 bu. berries
1 box berries
2 firkins butter
5½ bu. eggs
1 box castile soap
1 box mustard & pepper.[3]

3. Report to the General Assembly of Illinois at its 24th Session. 2 Vols., II, pp. 413 - 422.

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To State Agent at Cairo.

1231	dozen eggs	1000	lbs. codfish
44	gals. wine	8	lbs. halibut
5	barrels cornmeal	71	lbs. corn starch
3	barrels crackers	100	lbs. pearl barley
1	gal. molasses	4	papers pins
1798	shirts	18	combs
1288	prs. drawers	8	pincushions
549	prs. socks	30	lbs. castile soap
1310	handkerchiefs	18	cakes toilet soap
109	dressing gowns	7	quires paper
188	prs. slippers	125	envelopes
20	coats	5	boxes reading matter
31	prs. pants	28	vols. books
1	vest	16	qts. whiskey
117	bed sacks	5	bottles cordial
443	pads	47	bottles wine
666	pillows	363	qts. canned fruit
542	pillow cases	309	fans
63	comforts	1	box herbs
75	sheets	150	crutches
6	blankets	35	sponges
1221	towels	5	lbs. tea
25	napkins	5	lbs. sugar
6	boxes bandages & lint	95	tin cups
22	abdominal bandages	4	dippers
1	box clothes	10	wash basins
35	barrels potatoes	1	sack unopened clothing
1	box potatoes	2	boxes unopened clothing
32	sacks potatoes	393	boxes unopened stores & supplies
3	barrels onions	55	bbls. unopened stores & supplies
6	sacks onions	23	kegs unopened stores & supplies
3552	lbs. dried fruit	5	sacks unopened stores & supplies
1	keg pickles	1	lot hens
258	gals. pickles	17	boxes sanitary stores
4	qts. horse-radish	3	boxes clothing & canned fruit
5	gals. catsup	1	barrel cider vinegar
841	lbs. butter		

To Mrs. Bickerdyke: 200 bu. potatoes
$100 worth butter and eggs.[4]

4. Report to the General Assembly of Illinois at its 24th Session. 2 Vols., II, p. 428.

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The total list of supplies forwarded by the State Bureau during the first eight months of its existence tell the story of the women working to supply the army of their country with the things which in a modern army are largely looked after by the Government, but what the Government in 1861, struggling as it was to keep together, could not obtain.

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Chapter VI

Aid Societies and Their Work.

The work of the Northwestern Sanitary Commission, of the United States Christian Commission, and of the Illinois Sanitary Bureau was financed to some extent by men of the State, but the making of supplies, the sewing, the cooking, canning, and the food sent, came from the homes of the ordinary women through the whole State of Illinois. Not one section or part of Illinois was left out, but women from every little town and village formed Aid Societies under various names whose object was to supply the army with the things which the Government did not have and could not buy. The attempts to aid were rather confused and often humorous, at first, for the women were not used to organizing their own societies.

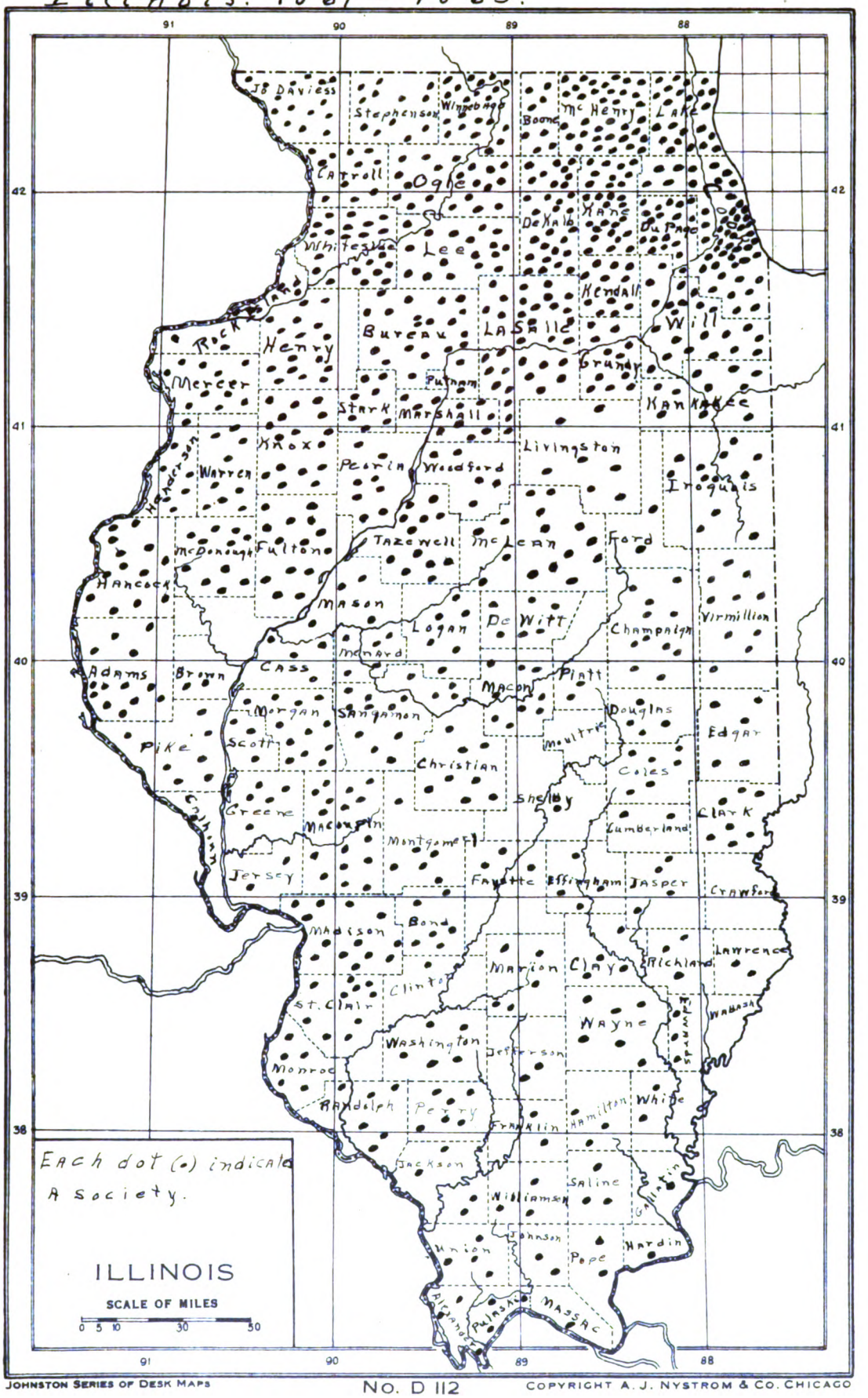
At Decatur, women only were invited to attend the first meeting of the Hospital Aid Society at the Baptist Church. About two hundred women came out, but probably not one of them had ever stood up to speak in a public meeting although they had received some instruction in parliamentary law

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Soldiers' Aid Societies in Illinois. 1861 - 1865.

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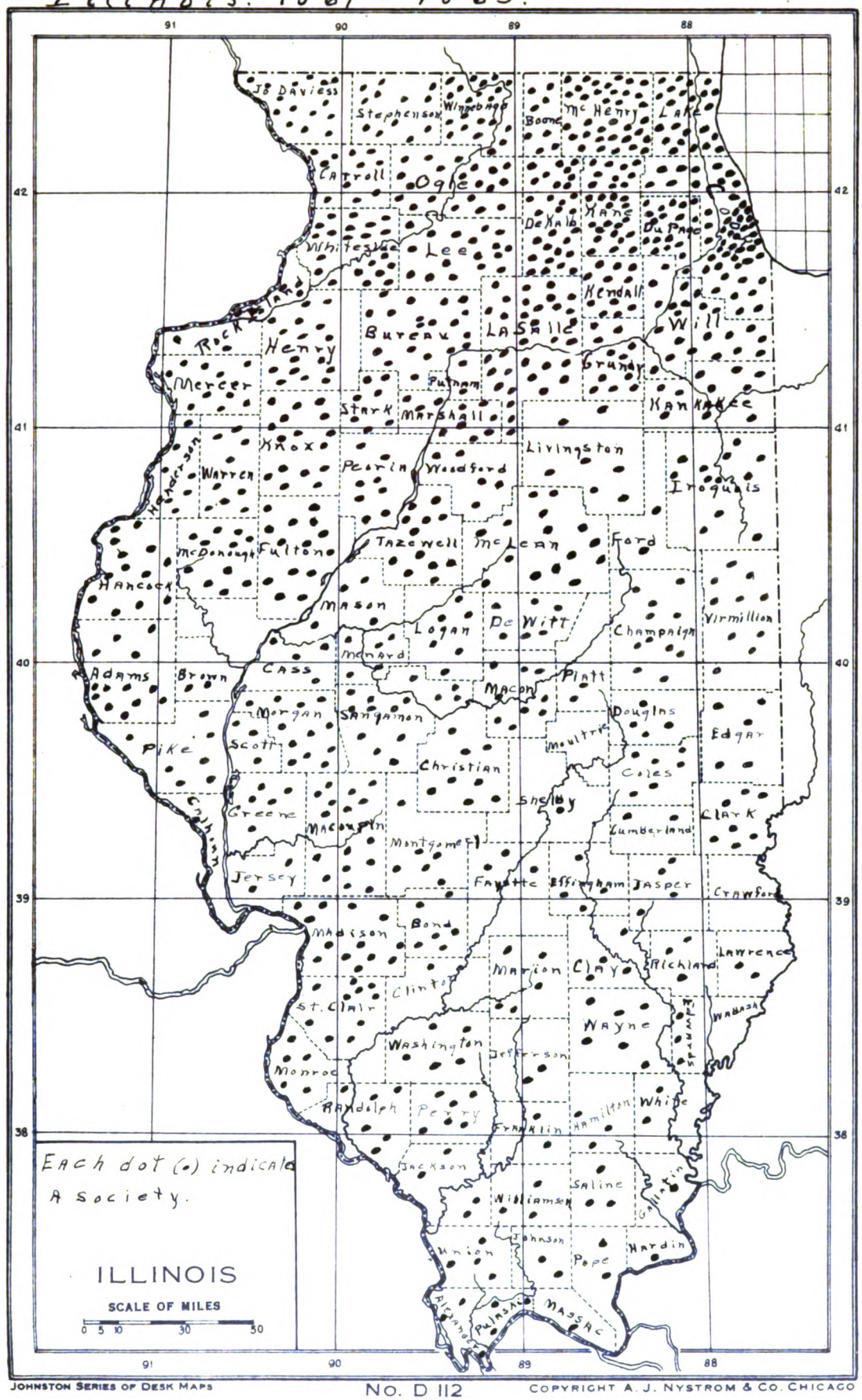
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Soldiers' Aid Societies in Illinois. 1861 - 1865.

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under Mary Lyons. "Each woman, as she entered the church, quietly took her seat in the pews and reverently whispered to her neighbor, but not one ventured to 'open the meeting.' After about an hour of this waiting some one exclaimed aloud: 'Hadn't we better send for Dr. Barnes to tell us what to do?' (Dr. Barnes had presided at the opening meeting). A babel of objections came from all quarters of the room. . . . One woman finally ventured to go to the front and, pounding on the table with a hymn book, called for order, and asked, 'Won't some one nominate a chairman for this meeting?' Mrs. Johns was nominated and the ladies then proceeded, organized and managed their own work until the Decatur Aid Society became one of the strongest in Illinois.[1]

Similarly, societies were formed , and the work which they did, varied widely. At Decatur, after Fort Donelson, the women met at Mrs. Green's residence. Each woman brought a case knife, a pair of scissors, and all the old cloth she could spare to make lint and bandages. At Thanksgiving time, a festival was held at Power's Hall, the proceeds of which were to be used for sick and wounded soldiers. Festivals became quite popular as a method of raising money and throughout May and June of every year,

1. Mrs. Jane Martin Johns. Personal Recollections, pp. 158 - 159.

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a number of Strawberry Festivals were held for Sanitary Benefit, and Ice Cream Festivals followed during the summer. Lectures, Concerts, and Gift Concerts were other popular methods used. The Ottawa Aid Society had an excursion trip to Chicago with the proceeds of that given to the Commission. Dramatic Clubs put on plays, and devoted the proceeds to the purchase of supplies. In the churches, organizations had lectures, and collections for the cause. During the year 1864, many people devoted their earnings of one day to the cause, school teachers, laborers, and big business men, alike carefully giving over the proceeds of the day's work. Children in Peru, Chicago and all over the State, had Children's fairs, canvassed for vegetables, grated horse-radish, made quilts, and even paid their weekly or monthly bit to aid the soldiers.

In Chicago the Camp Douglas Aid Soicety was formed to aid the soldiers in the camp, and to help soldier's wives find employment. In September 1862, the camp was so muddy the soldiers could scarcely cook there, and they lacked clothing and a dry place to sleep. The ladies of St. Pauls Church took up work for Camp Douglas and sent a delegation to camp every day laden with supplies. The ladies of Prairie Union, Rock Island County, sent turkeys, pies, chickens and cakes for the New Year's Dinner at Camp

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Douglas. Most of the camps were supplied with special donations of food for each holiday meal.[2]

One need which became evident early in the war was that of providing food for the soldiers who were travelling to or from the front. At Decatur, many of the Illinois Central trains carrying wounded and sick soldiers to the North stopped. In March 1862, the station agent received a message asking that supper be secured from some source, for about thirty hungry, sick, and wounded soldiers who would have a half hour supper stop at Decatur. About twenty or thirty women filled their baskets and met the train. They were most gratefully received by the pale, emaciated , half-starved men. Decatur women organized and arranged to meet every train and supply food for all of the men. Sometimes the men refused to take the food saying, "Thank you, I have no money. We have not been paid for months." But all were served free with many dainties to tempt the lost appetites of the sick men.[3]

In Egypt, the work of relief was more difficult, although the majority of the people were loyal to the Union, there were many rebels,copperheads, and Knights of the Golden Circle, who burned bridges, and at Centralia tried to

2. The Chicago Tribune. December 11, 1862.
3. Johns. Personal Recollections, p. 176.

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burn the roundhouse. Centralia sponsored a Soldier's Fair, for a time conducted a Soldier's Home, and the surgeon here gave free medical service to the soldiers.

With the re-election of Lincoln in 1864, Rockford Ladies Soldiers' Aid Society had a Grand Union Jubilee with speeches, music, and refreshments which netted upwards of $1,000 for the Society.

Sunday, January 3, 1863, was set aside by all of the clergy of the Northwest, to press the needs of the Commission and to take up collections in the churches. The clergy were very instrumental in keeping up the enthusiasm for giving. One minister was to have a funeral for a soldier who had been brought home from a Nashville hospital. While awaiting the arrival of the remains he presented the claims of the Commission to the awaiting crowd, and took up a collection.[4]

Ladies were asked to donate all manner of supplies, even to onion-slips and cabbage plants for the soldier's gardens at the hospitals. Among one of the unusual donations was that of four hundred quarts of canned fruit received by the Illinois Sanitary Commission from the Illinois Insane Asylum. Many quarts of fruit and bushels

4. Henshaw. Our Branch and its Tributaries, p. 95.

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of vegetables were provided by the women of the Northwest.[5]

Beside the relief work for the soldiers, one very important type of work was that of aiding the soldier's families by providing fuel, food or work for them as they needed most. In Illinois, the matter of bounties for the soldiers was cared for by counties, and most counties provided some relief - as in the case of Cumberland county when the Board of Supervisors appointed a committee "to see to the wants and procure such measures as, in their judgment, shall conduce to the sustenance and support of the families of the absent volunteers." Cook County in 1864, paid a weekly allowance to some twelve hundred soldier's families.[6] Will County in 1861, provided that the wife of every soldier or the head of the soldier's family, should receive $1.25 per week with a fifty cent allowance for every child under twleve years of age, and also extended this relief to the families of men who had lost their lives in the service.[7] In Whiteside County, the revenue derived from the Dog Tax was ordered to be paid into the "Relief Fund for Soldiers' Families." In most of the counties the Doctors rendered gratuitous service to the families of all soldiers.

5. Report of the General Assmebly of Illinois, 1865, II, p. 425.
6. Counties of Cumberland, Jasper, and Richland, Illinois, Pub. by F.A.Battery & Co.,(Chicago, 1884), p. 177.
7. George H. Woodruff, Fifteen Years Ago, (Joliet, 1876), p. 35.

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In McLean County, Grover and Wenston agreed to furnish all soldier's families with soap and candles for the entire length of the war, and to continue to do so for the families of all the soldiers who did not return. The total amount of bounties paid to soldier's families in Illinois was over $1,000,000.00.

The heavy part of the relief work for the families, however, fell on the local Aid Societies, and on the women of each locality. Many men hesitated and refused to volunteer because of the hardships the family would have to suffer. So that simultaneously with the formation of Companies and Regiments, local people formed Societies for the relief of soldiers' families. During the summer time the families did not suffer so severely, but with the coming of cold weather many wives and children suffered from cold and from lack of food. The winter of 1863, was especially severe. The wives and daughters struggled nobly, doing whatever work they could find to do. But things looked dark for them. One poor woman in Chicago, was the mother of nine children. She said,"Thank God, the eldest is able to work; but the next is a cripple, and the rest are all young children!" She had not received any pay from her husband for a year and a half, and did not know whether he was alive or not.

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Another woman's husband was in Libby prison and she had not heard from him for five months. She had four children, the oldest one who was seven cared for the younger ones while the mother worked. Sometimes upon returning from her work she would find the fire out, the stove piled up with snow and the children crying from cold and hunger. Another old woman sat in her room with a husband crippled with rheumatism and her son in the Danville prison, and she had received no pay from him for over sixteen months.[8]

In December, 1863, the Ladies Relief Society was formed in Chicago with Mrs. Hoge as President, and Mrs. Tinkham as Vice President. The following January they furnished relief for some nine hundred families. The same year, an Employment Bureau was opened by Mrs. Edgerton, where applications for work were received from soldiers' wives only.[9] Even the women who secured work were very poorly paid, receiving sixty-two cents per dozen for making over-alls, and over-shirts, while they had to furnish the thread at the rate of twenty-five cents for a dozen, which counting out care-fare would make the net profit for a day's work about twenty-seven and one-half cents, or about two and

8. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 260.
9. The Chicago Tribune. February 8, 1864.

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three-twelfths cents apiece. A woman working in a laundry would receive two dollars a week and board, for working from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M., or about three and one-third cents for every hour of work at the washtub.[10]

In Chicago committees were appointed to investigate the conditions of the soldiers' families and to ascertain the necessity for relief. In January, 1864, Mrs. Bristol visited fifteen families and found thirty-one bare-footed children whose feet were more or less frozen. There were some cases where the Mothers were drunken vagabonds and spent the relief money for drink, but in most cases the money provided for the fuel, food, and clothing, was gratefully received and carefully used.

Early in 1861, Galena raised $1200 for the families of the volunteers; Sandwich raised $5,000 for the farmer families of her soldiers, and De Kalb raised money and gave wheat, corn, and other produce to care for the families of the soldiers from De Kalb and Malta.[11]

With the close of the war many wives and mothers were admitted to the "Home for Soldiers' Wives and Mothers" at Washington, D.C. and various committees organized to care for the Soldiers' Orphans in Illinois.

10. The Chicago Tribune. August, 1864.
11. Ibid., April 24, 1861.

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Another group of organizations which were formed all over the country, and eventually did about the same work as the Aid Societies, were the Loyal Leagues, or Union Leagues of Women. That League organized in Peoria in June, 1863, in its pledge clearly states the purpose of its formation: "We the undersigned women of Peoria believing that in this hour of national peril to our country, every influence, moral as well as military, should be brought to bear in the great struggle for existence against a wicked rebellion, and that our fathers, husbands, sons and brothers are giving their treasure and their blood, it is our duty to contribute the influence which God has given us in our social sphere to the same holy cause; and that in this solemn crisis, loyalty to our country is bound to be outspoken even in the case of women, as true loyalty to God. We therefore do constitute ourselves an association to be known as 'The Women's National League of Peoria,' and do pledge our unconditional adhesion to our National Government in its struggle against the present rebellion, engaging to assist it by whatever means may be in our power, in the maintenance of our National Union. . . . ." Some three hundred ladies joined this League at Peoria. Among other types of relief work which it did, was the establishment of a Soldiers' Rest in Peoria, in August, 1863, and in 1864,

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it formed a Freedman's Aid Society. In all this League handled receipts of $13,640.83. When it met for a final meeting, the money remaining in the treasury was voted to be used to improve the soldiers' lot at the Springfield Cemetary.[12]

"The Ladies National Covenant" was formed in Washington in May, 1864. A number of Illinois cities adopted this organization. The badge of the organization was a "Black Bee", wrought according to nature, worn with a tri-colored ribbon a little in front of the left shoulder." The pledge of the Covenant was: "For three years, or during the war, we pledge ourselves to each other and to the country to purchase no Imported Goods, when those of American manufacture can be obtained. We furthermore pledge ourselves to purchase no article of Foreign Importation contained in the following list: dress goods of velvet, Silks, Grenadines, India Crepe and Organdies, India Lace and Broche Shawls. Furs, Wrought Laces and Embroideries, Jewelry, Watches and Precious Stones. Hair Ornaments, Fans, Artificial Flowers and Feathers, Carpets, Furniture, Silks and Velvets, Painted China, Ormolu, Bronze, Marble Ornaments and Mirrors." With reports and rumors that Northern women were not as

12. History of Peoria County. Pub. by Johnson & Co., Chicago, 1880, pp. 414 - 417.

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patriotic as the Southern, the strength of the Union groups developed and their membership increased while the movement for dress reform and the curtailment of social life gained.[13]

With the close of the war and the return of the soldiers, the Soldiers' Aid Societies inaugurated and carried out receptions, banquets, and festivals to honor the soldiers. When the 100th Will County regiment returned a reception was given for them on July 1st, at the Court House Square in Joliet. The Mayor and the Council received them and they were honored by music from the band and the firing of cannon. The ladies were out to meet the soldiers dressed in their sanitary uniforms.[14]

The donations to the societies were kept up during the summer of 1865, and the making of hospital supplies was continued, but with the closing of the hospitals many societies had money in their treasuries, and in many cases they used this as a nucleus for a fund for a soldier's monument. At Bloomington, the women with their own hands planted trees around the graves of the heroes in the Soldiers' burial ground in Evergreen Cemetary. In Peoria,

13. The Chicago Tribune. June 13, 1864.
14. Woodruff. Fifteen Years Ago, p. 78.

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the women of the League re-organized into a new society whose object was "the erection of a suitable monument for the soldiers who are buried in Springfield Cemetary." The monument was completed at a cost of $2,500 and dedicated on Decoration Day, May 30, 1870, with hundreds of people gathered around the soldiers' lot.[15]

The monument erected at Galesburg in 1906, in honor of Mother Bickerdyke was signifcant because it commemorated the work of a woman. After the death of Mary Bickerdyke in 1901, the ladies of Galesburg organized an association known as the"Mother Bickerdyke Memorial Association," to erect a suitable testimonial to commemorate the work of this loyal woman. The State appropriated $3,000 for the purpose and a "beautiful statue of Mother Bickerdyke holding the cup of cold water to the dying soldier's lips, graces the Court House Park" of Galesburg. At the dedication services held May 22,1906, the address of the day was given by the Civil War Governor, Richard Yates, and 8,000 veterans, visitors and citizens attended the service.[16]

15. History of Peoria County. p. 418.
16. History of Knox County, Illinois, Pub. by Charles Chapman & Co., Chicago, 1878, p. 518.

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Chapter VII

Sanitary Fairs in Illinois.

When in the summer of 1863, the treasury of the Sanitary Commission was low, the supplies coming in were lessening and the demands on the Commission for supplies were ever increasing, Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Livermore earnestly sought to find some way to relieve the situation. They conceived of the idea of a Chicago Fair which should include all of the women of the Northwest. They outlined their plans for it and in July, presented them to the Commission and they were approved. At once circulars and letters were sent out to all of the aid societies calling for a meeting of ladies in Chicago in September, to complete the plans. The Chicago women hoped to make $25,000 with their Fair. They went to the men of the city to ask for their cooperation and the men laughed at the idea of a Fair. They said it was an impossibility and the ladies would be ahead if they would drop the whole thing and when it was necessary to have more money they would give them the

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$25,000 they wanted.[1]

The women were not discouraged but continued with their plans. The convention of ladies who met at Bryan Hall on September 2, 1863, was the largest assemblage of ladies ever convened in the Northwest up to that time, and it was magnificent in personnel and appearance. Mrs. Hoge was elected President and in an address to the women she urged the women to be loyal, patriotic and benevolent, and to think and act together for the brave, earnest dying men.[2]

The Fair opened October 27, and continued to November 7. Mayor Sherman of Chicago, declared the opening day a Holiday for Chicago, and all of the schools were closed, and the day turned into a Patriotic celebration. A parade three miles long marched through the streets of Chicago to the Hall. This was auspicious for the way the Fair developed, it became a demonstration in favor of war and not an exhibition of taste; it was an affirmation of principle and not a collection of fancy articles, an indorsement of the Government, not the laborious enterprise of a few women, but a great uprising of the Northwest people. Throughout the whole two weeks of the Fair

1. Grace Humphrey. Women in American History, p. 175.
2. The Chicago Tribune. September 2, 1863.

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enthusiasm continued and was greater on the last day than on the first.[3]

The Fair was planned by Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Livermore acting as President, Mr. Blatchford, as Treasurer and ladies of the Northwest on committees to plan the evening entertainments, the daily dinners, exhibits of fine arts, fruits and flowers, a committee to keep record of everything and one to prepare the advertising material and send it out. Sixteen States were represented in the Fair; Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Livermore had gone East to stimulate the interest there and Mrs. Colt had aroused enthusiasm for the Fair in Wisconsin. Pittsburg's donation was called "The Iron City," Connecticut sent a generous contribution; Illinois had fancy articles, merchandise and musical instruments; Wisconsin sent fancy articles and money; from Indiana there was minerals and currency; Michigan sent fruits, evergreens, hardware, minerals and specimens of manufactured gypsum. Each State tried to give things which were distinctly representative of their development, and all of them sent edibles for the dining hall, and fancy articles. The women had been so busy making the heavy garments and doing the plain sewing for the army that they had forgotton the.

3. Henshaw. Our Branch and its Tributaries, p. 216.

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lighter things, so the Fair acted as a revival of interest in the Fancy Goods.[4]

It would be impossible to try to list in any detail the contributions sent in to the Fair, but they showed the way in which men, women and children would give up for the cause of the soldiers. One interesting group participating in the Fair was the German ladies who conducted a booth which was presided over by Mrs. Solomon, the wife of Governor Solomon of Wisconsin. Beside the fancy goods, fruits, machinery etc., which was donated there were such things given as a thorough-bred colt which was sold at auction outside of Bryan Hall for $60. Two pet bears, formerly owned by an Indian Chief, "Little Crow" were given by a man from Minnesota. Various other animals were given and they were all sold at auction.[5]

Throughout the Fair, the ladies published two Fair papers. The "Fair Gazette" which was the newspaper of the Fair, and the "Volunteer." The "Volunteer" sold for five cents a copy and young girls acted as newsboys, the net receipts from its sale were three to four hundred dollars.[6]

4. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, pp. 220 - 222.
5. History of the Northwestern Soldier's Fair, (Chicago, 1864), p. 45.
6. Ibid., p. 5.

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Beside the larger group contributions there were many smaller ones which indicated a real sacrifice on the part of the giver. A soldier from Chicago, who died in a hospital of the Southwest, had no relatives except a sister. The small sum of money he had in his pocket was sent to her. This sum seemed too sacred to her to be spent for daily necessities, so she took it and bought some bright, soft zephyr worsted and knit a beautiful afghan which she gave to the Fair for the cause of the soldiers. This sold for one hundred dollars. One of the contraband women Dr. Todd brought to Chicago from Montgomery, Alabama, brought a sheet which she had made. She said, "I was raised in Jones County, Alabama. I'se fifty years old, missis; I'se left nine chil'en in de land ob bondage. Ten o' my lambs de great Lord's took and deys gone home to glory." An elderly German woman, speaking broken English, came to give all she could, fifty cents, to the Fair. She said she was a widow with one son in the army, and that she supported her other son by taking in washings. Six young ladies from Como, Illinois, sent five barrels of potatoes which they had planted, hoed, and dug, with their message, "Our efforts are feeble, but we remember our brave soldiers and we wish

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to do all in our power to alleviate their sufferings."[7]

Some of the large donations for the dining room came from the cities; Elgin sent all of the milk needed, Michigan donated great quantities of fruit, Grundy County, Illinois, sent roasted game. Poultry was supplied by the women near Chicago, and when the supply ran low, a group of women from Dubuque, went home, killed, prepared and roasted one hundred turkeys, two hundred chickens, and two hundred ducks.[8]

The chief treasure of the Fair was the original draught of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was presented by President Lincoln. Lithographed copies of the Proclamation were sold for the benefit of the Soldiers' Home. With the Proclamation Lincoln sent the following letter; written October 26, 1863: "To the Ladies having in charge the Northwest Fair for the Sanitary Commission of Chicago, Illinois:

According to the request made in your behalf, the original draft of the Emancipation Proclamation is herewith enclosed. The formal words at the top, and conclusion, except the signature, you perceive, are not in my handwriting. They were written at the State Department, by whom, I know

7. History of the Northwestern Soldiers' Fair, p. 48.
8. Frank B. Goodrich. The Tribute Book, (New York, 1865), p. 168.

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not. The printed part was cut from a copy of the preliminary proclamation and pasted on, merely to save writing. I had some desire to retain the paper; but if it shall contribute to the relief or comfort of the soldiers, that will be better.

Your obedient servant,

A. Lincoln."[9]

The Proclamation was purchased by Honorable Thomas B. Bryan, for $3,000, to be given to the Chicago Soldiers' Home of which he was President. At the beginning of the Fair, James H. Hoes, Esquire, jeweller, had offered a watch to the largest single contributor to the Fair and the sale of the Proclamation entitled President Lincoln to the watch. This was sent to him with a letter from Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Livermore. Lincoln acknowledged its receipt and extended his "sincere thanks for the kind and generous expression by which it was accompanied."[10]

The Fair closed with a dinner to which all the soldiers in the city were invited, and at which there were some six hundred present. After the dinner speeches, cheers for Abraham Lincoln, for the soldiers, and for the ladies were

9. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 219.
10. History of the Northwestern Soldiers' Fair, p. 54.

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in order. Then the singing of patriotic hymns followed. At the suggestion, "Let us not forget our dead" all stood with uncovered heads while a dirge was played and the dinner closed with the singing of "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."[11]

The Fair netted in money practically $80,000, which with the 75,000 soldiers under the care of the Chicago Commission, would not average much more than one dollar per soldier, but independent of the money realized from it, the moral effect alone was a great work for the country and it connected the States up more closely in their work and the idea of "nationality" became much more firmly established in the Northwest.[12]

The second great Fair in Chicago, was planned before the war ended, but was held after peace had been declared, opening June 8, 1865, and lasting for three weeks. The total receipts of this Fair were $85,000.00, which were divided between the Sanitary Commission, the Soldiers' Home and the Christian Commission. The plans for this Fair were more elaborate than those of 1863, and it developed into a celebration commemorating the closing of the war, and a reception for the returning soldiers.

11. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 216.
12. United States Sanitary Commission Bulletin, (New York, 1863), p. 67.

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Chicago was jubilant when the declaration of Lee's surrender on April 9, 1865, reached them. Then the women pushed the work of the Fair and were greatly encouraged because Mrs. Hoge had visited President Lincoln, to invite the President and Mrs. Lincoln to return to their home State to attend the Fair, and Lincoln had said, "Unless State affairs interfere, if the people want me, I will go."

The assassination of Lincoln on April 14, brought such a sense of loss and sorrow, that the city felt hushed. Even in the midst of the procession which opened the Fair, the memory of the funeral cortege of Lincoln was uppermost, and through all the festivities of the Fair, there was an undercurrent of sadness. The ladies all wore mourning badges, and every booth bore a picture of Lincoln draped in black.[13]

The buildings for this Fair were erected in Dearborn Park fronting Lake Michigan. This was a mammoth undertaking, it was the last Fair of its kind and the largest, it received support from all of the North and even from foreign countries with its war trophy exhibits, Rebel Flags, autographs, and photographs of the war as one of its greatest attractions.

13. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 291.

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The "Old New England Farmhouse" was erected, and on one night a real wedding was held here in which the bride, Miss Maggie Snar, and the groom, Mr. George P. Clapp, and relatives were all dressed in costumes of the early settlers.

"One of the most pleasant uses to which the Fair building was put, was the reception of our brave soldiers, thousands of whom were there saluted, and all - from Lieutenant-General to High Private - received with a hearty enthusiasm that told how much we felt we owed to them. Major-General Sherman arrived here on the 8th of June, and a most cordial welcome was extended to him by all classes. On the 10th, Lieutenant-General Grant arrived here, and was received in Union Hall with an ovation perfectly tremendous in extent and enthusiasm. On the same day, arrived the 105th regiment of Illinois volunteers, followed subsequently by the following regiments. . . . . all of which were suitably received in the Union Hall and subsequently entertained at the Rest or elsewhere."[14]

The number of smaller Fairs held throughout Illinois were many and each one represented the cooperation and efforts of the women of the cities which fostered them.

14. T. M. Eddy. Patriotism of Illinois, 2 Vols., (Chicago, 1865), p. 543.

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The contributions of these Fairs were of great importance in continuing the work of the Commission. A partial list of towns holding Fairs is: Evanston, Qunicy, Decatur, Rockford, Sterling, Bristol, Ottawa, Mt. Carroll, Polo, and Galesburg. Illinois Societies also sent contributions to a number of Fairs outside of the State among which were: The Northern Iowa Fair at Dubuque, the Southern Iowa Fair, the Mississippi Valley Fair at St. Louis, the Central Iowa Fair at Muscatine, and the Pittsburg Fair.[15]

15. The Chicago Tribune. April, 1864.

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Chapter VIII

The Cairo and Chicago Soldiers' Homes.

In October, 1861, the people of the Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago, sent Reverend E. Folsom as a missionary agent for relief work at Cairo. Nearly all soldiers going south and west passed through Cairo. The sick and wounded, anxious to get to their homes in the North, also arrived there, many made very ill by their exertions, all tired, rather discouraged and very often penniless. The General Agent of the United States Sanitary Commission at Cairo, saw the pitiful condition of these soldiers waiting for transportation, without friends, often compelled to sleep on the platforms outside the railroad Depots, and to go without food or beg for it. He applied to the military authorities to use a part of the Sanitary Commission building and for the right to draw on the Commission for rations and equipment for a Rest for the soldiers. He was given the right to use a room, the Chicago Branch sent the necessary furniture, the medical department gave the cots, and the bedding was secured from the supply department of the

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Commission. So when Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Maddy arrived on March 23, 1862, to act as Superintendent and Matron of the Home, the real work began. The purpose of the Rest was to give assistance, information, advice and instruction to the soldiers, procure discharge papers, obtain passes, and house, feed, and cheer the soldiers. It was really a free hotel for them, managed by the Sanitary Commission, and supported by the Northwest.[1]

The difficulties and problems of the work at the Home were many. The Commission felt that in looking after the women who came to Cairo, the wives and mothers who came to the sick soldiers, the ladies of the Christian Commission who came on business, and the teachers of the Freedmen, that the Home filled one great need.[2]

The climate of Cairo made work difficult. In the summer, it was intensely hot, with dust all day, in the winter, it was intensely cold, and in the fall and winter during the wet season, everything was inundated with a muddy season following as the water receded.

As the war progressed, Cairo became choked, and the Home hopelessly crowded, with soldiers furloughed, paroled, discharged, sick and dying; with boys rejected from

1. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, pp. 54 - 61.
2. Ibid., p. 243.

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regiments as too young to serve; with citizens seeking their wounded; friends accompanying their dead; with nurses, refugees, freedmen, rebel deserters, and rebel prisoners, all of whom demanded, and received, the hospitality of the Home.[3] After repeated attempts to get larger quarters for the Home, Mr. Shipman finally appealed directly to General Grant for aid, and Grant ordered the Commanding Officer to construct such a building as the Sanitary agent should order. This was built at a cost of $10,000 to the Government, and $2200 to the Commission. It was completed ready for use in February, 1864. At that time Mrs. Grant was Matron and she superintended moving from the old to the new home.

Mrs. Grant says that the new Home, "could not possibly have been improved." It was carefully planned and built. Due to the swampy condition of the land it was impossible to excavate for a basement, so Mr. Shipman bought a boat, moored it near the kitchen and thus provided a cool storage "cellar" for the Home. Mrs. Grant made the Home a model of order, the working, scrubbing, cleaning and cooking was done as regularly here as in a private home. She was especially proud of the kitchen and kept all the apparatus

3. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 139.

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shining and in order.

The regular workers at the Home were three colored boys, Big Dick, who drove the ambulance and met the two regular daily trains, and all other trains and boats, to bring the sick soldiers to the Home, and direct those who were able to walk to it, and two other boys to help with the care of the two or three cows, and the hauling of baggage and supplies; three diswashers, four kitchen boys, four dining room boys, two or three house maids, an assistant woman for diet cooking, the Superintendent of the hospital room and dormitories , a baggage master, a ticket clerk, and an office clerk. Many of these employees were detailed soldiers liable to call at any minute which made the work of Matron at the Home more uncertain and difficult.[4]

There were two hundred and three beds in the Home to keep clean and free from vermin, these were usually all occupied at some time during the day or night. The dining room seated two hundred or two hundred and ten people if crowded. Troops returning through Cairo were frequently fed at the Rest. Men were admitted to the Home one at a time or in squads of from two to one hundred and fifty. Their names were registered and each man was given a ticket

4. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 270.

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of admittance to the dining room.[5] The 140th Illinois, on its way home, September 20, 1864, by setting the table three times were all fed with coffee, good bread and butter, stewed fruit and pickles. In July, 1864, a Wisconsin regiment going down the river telegraphed Mr. Shipman begging that refreshments be ready for them at the Home. Dinner was over, the kitchen boys who prepared meals for the regular occupants at the Home, were resting, but they sprang up and prepared to serve the thousand men. In an hour they had made four boilers full of strong coffee with eighty gallons of water heated in two large kettles to dilute it; they cut four thousand slices of bread, which four ladies, Mrs. Grant one of them, spread with butter, having nothing else in the Home for such a large number; this with pickles for all was ready when the regiment arrived. The day was so hot that eighteen of the men were prostrated and taken to the hospital where Mrs. Grant carried ice and cold water to them. After the regiment left, the regular tea for the three hundred people at the Home had to be prepared.[6]

Mrs. Grant emphasized the importance of religion, and every inmate had the privilege of religious readings and

5. U.S. Sanitary Commission Bulletin, (New York, 1864), p. 717.
6. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 268.

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services at the Home. Mrs. Lizzie Aiker, of Illinois, said, "No boy left without a mother's counsel or a sister's word of cheer."[7]

The army regulations and form meant little to Mrs. Grant when a need arose. In the kitchen of a Wisconsin regiment quartered near the Home, the stove smoked so badly that it was impossible to cook on it, so four of the men came to the Home for toast and gruel for their sick. Mrs. Grant asked the surgeon why he did not get a new stove? He said he had tried but the Quartermaster was so used to complaints he would do nothing for them. Mrs. Grant told the hospital steward, "If you will put that old stove in the river, I will have all your hospital cooking done at the Home until you get a new one." The stove suddenly disappeared and when the Quartermaster learned, some two weeks later, that the regiment had no stove, he sent them a new one. When Mrs. Grant was told this she said, "What people must have to cook with they must have.[8]

In March, 1865, the Andersonville prisoners returned through Cairo. Mrs. Grant did all she could to care for these poor, wasted, exhausted, scurvy-poisoned boys,

7. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 271.
8. Ibid., p. 283.

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getting for them whatever they wanted to eat if it was possible. She even procured Cove Oysters for one poor boy.[9]

By October, 1865, the work was lessened, most of the troops having returned, and the Home was closed, after being in operation three and one-half years. The total expense of the Home to the Northwest Sanitary Commission had been $22,271.54, with a record of 198,454 men admitted; 476,993 meals furnished and lodgings provided for 141,462, with many kept and fed who were not recorded and included in this estimate.[10]

The need for some method of caring for transient soldiers at Chicago, was very similar to that in Cairo. The Sanitary Commission tried to care for them, but many boys were not reached in this way. One poor boy arrived in Chicago with a broken shoulder almost healed. He fell into the hands of some one who took him to some den, gave him liquor and let him go. He staggered along and fell, breaking again the bones of his wounded arm, and bruising his face. He was found the next morning by the Sanitary Commission.[11] But in an effort to eliminate such accidents

9. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 296.
10. Ibid., p. 306.
11. The Chicago Tribune. June 6, 1863.

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the Young Men's Christian Association, the Sanitary Commission, and the women of Chicago began to talk of a Chicago Home. They investigated those already established at Philadelphia, and Nashville, and about the middle of June, 1863, adopted a plan for a Home with its work to be "gratuitous refreshment and temporary lodging for the soldiers." Mr. Thomas B. Bryan was elected President, and his duty was to see about the erection and arrangement of the Home. A house on Randolph Street was selected and most of the furniture needed was donated by Chicago women. The Gas and Water Company promised to furnish the gas free if it was used economically. In order to help pay for the Home, various enterprises were entered upon; Mrs. Livermore planned a mammoth Strawberry Festival; the Opera Troup at McVicker's gave a matinee for the benefit of the Home. The Home is fitted and functioning so that by July 4th, a dinner was held here for the soldiers and all those from Camp Douglas were invited in for the dinner. The ladies working at the Home were very much encouraged in their work by a letter from the War Department encouraging them in their efforts.[12]

In August, 1863, George Smith, a private of the 105th

12. The Chicago Tribune. June 30, 1863.

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Illinois, arrived at the Home very sick and requested that he might be taken home to Wayne Station, Dupage County. Mrs. Dagenhart volunteered to go with him. The Galena Railroad gave them passes, and promised to give them such privileges under similar circumstances. The Chicago and Northwestern also gave Mrs. Bristol free use of a special car in bringing a sick soldier to Wisconsin.

By October, the facilities of the Home are not enough to accomodate the requirements, and since the Home has been able to care for temporary cases only, the need of a Permanent Home is discussed. To relieve the situation at the Home it was decided to entertain the regiments at the Depot. During November, the Physician prescribed for two hundred and five men at the Home, and six permanent invalid soldiers were allowed to remain at the Home. By December the ladies interested in the work put on a campaign to make the Soldiers' Home Permanent. They wanted to erect a new Home, obtain funds for the purpose and invest these funds in Government securities.[13]

On New Year's Day and evening, the Skating Field at Washington Park was donated for the benefit of the Soldiers' Home, and later in January a Circus Benefit contributed to

13. The Chicago Tribune. December 2, 1863.

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the fund. In February, the Rest was erected with the Government to furnish and heat the rooms,and the Soldiers' Home to supply food and entertainment.[14] With the Rest opened, the congestion at the Home was somewhat relieved but agitation for a new Home was still continued with the result that on May 13, 1864, the new Home was opened at Fairview. Part of the proceeds from the Fair held in Chicago, in 1865, were turned over to the Home and the main building of the Soldiers' Home was erected at a cost of $30,000, and opened May 10, 1866, with ninety-nine inmates, fifteen of these blind veterans, and twenty disabled soldiers who were studying at the Commercial College. In 1867, the Soldiers' Home was incorporated as a charitable institution by an Act ot the General Assembly of the State of Illinois, and State appropriations made for its benefit. The Home was closed in 1877, and the sixteen inmates were sent to the National Soldiers' Home at Milwaukee, Wis. or Dayton, Ohio.[15]

14. The Chicago Tribune. February 19, 1864.
15. A. T. Andreas. History of Chicago, 3 Vols., (Chicago, 1885), II, p. 313.

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Chapter IX

Rebels, Refugees, and Freedmen.

Many of the people in Illinois had moved up there from Southern States, and with the breaking of the war were divided in their sympathies between their love of their early southern homes and relatives, and the new home which they had adopted. So in Illinois, there was rather a center of sympathy for the Secessionists, and quite a strong band of copperheads was formed. This was indignantly and vigorously combatted by the loyal Unionists, and the loyal press of the State, and in some parts every person had to swear an "oath of allegiance" to the Union. In July, 1862, a Secesh woman was arrested at Camp Douglas, under suspicious circumstances. A jury of nations was called and in examining the case they found a full rebel mail in her petticoats. This was seized, and as it became known the press demanded that every female traitor as well as every mail traitor should meet with the just, social penalty, if no more.[1]

1. The Chicago Tribune. March 26, 1862.

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As the confederate prisoners came north, the people of Chicago were faced with the problem of how they should be treated, as an enemy or as human brothers. At a meeting in Bryan Hall in March, 1862, a collection was taken up for the relief of the prisoners at Camp Douglas, some one or two hundred dollars was raised to supply them with stationary, on the principle that they should "conquer the rebels by doing them good." This spirit was not very generally held in Chicago, but it was more generally believed that northern rebels were encouraging the prisoners too much and supply and relief should better be devoted to the northern soldiers in training at the Camp. The soldiers themselves, complained that the prisoners at Douglas received better treatment from Chicago than they did.

Among the prisoners at Camp Douglas, there were two women, wives of private soldiers, who accompanied the prisoners and had been washing for the officers. The Northern women were usually defended as not giving sympathy and luxuries to the prisoners although there probably were some who did try to gain access to the prisoners, seldom succeeding, and then only by deception.[2]

Another question in which Northern sympathy was some-

2. The Chicago Tribune. April 15, 1862.

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what divided, was that of supplying food for the starving wives and children of the rebels. General Halleck appealed to the noble-hearted people of the North, to furnish provisions, but S. McF-- of the 11th Iowa Volunteers, expressed the feeling that if the food was sent, it would go to the troops of the South. He thought if the widows and children had to be fed, they should be brought North, and that after the war when the widows and orphans of the North were cared for, then the people might look after the needs of the rebels.[3]

In southern Illinois, the coming of the white and colored refugees was much more of a problem than that of the rebels. By the summer of 1862, large numbers of refugees were pressing into Cairo. They huddled together by the hundreds in a vacant camping ground. They were without food or clothing, helpless and destitute, having been pushed out of their homes by the advancing armies. The Chicago Sanitary Commission supplied shoes, a quantity of rebel blankets which had been captured at Fort Donelson, and food for these colored refugees, thus anticipating the work of the Freedman's Commission.[4] Later, when the new Soldiers' Home at Cairo was occupied, the old building was given over

3. The Chicago Tribune. July 4, 1862.
4. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 93.

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to refugees. With very few exceptions the white refugees here were of the "poor white trash" and were much less thankful for the aid they received, than the colored people were.

Cairo received a large part of the refugees. In July, 1864, they were still arriving in immense numbers, devoid of clothing, food or money, and nothing to do but lie on the ground in their filthy rags, with the thermometer standing at ninety degrees. These poor white people seemed to have no more intelligence than animals, probably having become deadened mentally by the sufferings they had endured, as they were pushed out of their homes, and forced to go North. Some of the more ambitious of them, however, settled in southern Illinois and built up homes for themselves. The 1863 report of the Illincis Central Railroad land sales says that, one-third of the land sales for that year were to southern settlers.[5]

At Bloomington, Illinois, the poor increased rapidly, and many of the families depending on charity were those of southern soldiers. At the Normal School there, some scholars asserted that "they were from the South and had been sent there for protection during the war." At Alton,

5. Emerson David Fite. Agricultural Development of the West, in Quarterly Journal of Economics, XX, 1906, p. 269.

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there were some four hundred refugees whom the people of St. Louis refused to aid. The Government supplied them with half-rations of hominy, beans, bread and meat, but could not provide clothing and fuel.[6] At Helena, Mrs. S. A. Martha Canfield, the wife of an Ohio soldier, established an asylum which soon housed one hundred orphan children. In January, 1865, about one hundred and twenty-five southern refugees arrived at Rockford. They were quartered temporarily in the Court House, until they were provided with places of employment. At Galena, Illinois, a negro applied to Mrs. Chetlain for food and shelter. He complained of not feeling well, and a physician upon consultation said he had small-pox. Mrs. Chetlain put him in a small out-house, and cared for him until his recovery.

Decatur, "got her first dose (of refugees) sometime in August, 1862," and the experiences of her women in handling them were probably quite similar to those of many women throughout all of Illinois. Mayor E. O. Smith received a telegram from Headquarters at Cairo saying, that, "about sixty refugees, women and children, will be left at Decatur on the five P.M. train. Make some arrangement for their reception." The authorities were so used to calling on the

6. The Chicago Tribune. May 24, 1865.

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women for help that they at once transferred this order to the Aid Society, and generously offered to give all the assistance they could. The women hurried around to provide for the incoming refugees. Mrs. Greer reported that the "old Methodist Church back of her house was empty" and Mrs. Evans found an empty house in the north-east part of town which would house twenty people. The soldiers' wives cleared the church and secured straw for beds, two stoves and some boxes for tables. Supper was prepared for the people by the Depot Committee, and the whole town was at the station to meet the five o'clock train, a few of the people planning to take some of these unwelcome guests to their homes, but when the train arrived they decided not to.

"The indescribable mass of filth, disease, vermin, and tobacco that had been unloaded from the train began to clamor: 'What's you'uns goin' to do with we'uns?' 'Ain't you'uns got no cown-bread? Wheat bread ain't fillin.'" and so on. Mrs. Greer immediately rushed to the store to secure two large tubs to set up an improvised bath-room, but its use was declined. After trying to care for, and help these people, the Executive Committee of the Aid Society met and reported that "The last straw had been put on the camel's back and she kicked." From that time on the Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor of the city, assumed the

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responsibility of caring for the refugees. "The Supervisors furnished wood, and rations, and ordered the children sent to school. The consequences of that order will never be forgotton by any old citizen of Decatur. Red precipitate and zinc ointment became the chief articles of trade in the Drug Stores, and larkspur seed was at a premium."[7]

The chief aim in the refugee work was to try to enable the women to become self-supporting, if possible, and so provide food, clothing, and shelter for them only until they were able to care for themselves. The work with the colored people was somewhat different from that for the white people. The colored refugees were just newly freed slaves and were fearful of just what would happen to them, and so more open to suggestion, and more willing to receive aid. The Northwestern Freedman's Aid Commission was organized in Chicago on December 28, 1863, an out-growth of the Freedman's Aid Committee which had been formed in September, and which in December combined with the Freedman's Aid Committee of the Sanitary Commission.[8] The aim of the Directors was "to alleviate the sufferings of the

7. Johns. Personal Recollections, pp. 183 - 185.
8. The Chicago Tribune. December 30, 1863.

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Freed people, incident to their new and embarrassing condition, pending the termination of the war and the restoration of stable social relations; and at the same time to encourage them to aspire at once to a higher plane of living, than the masses of the poor attain." The means by which the Commission hoped to accomplish these ends, Temporary Homes, Orphan Asylums, Industrial Schools, Hospitals and visits of relief agents with clothing, food, and medicine to the camps and cabins. The Commission was very effective in relieving the physical needs of the black men, and received money from all of the Northwest for this purpose; but the most unique and unusual work was done in improving the social, educational, and moral condition of the freedmen.[9]

The need for teachers and agents was answered by intelligent and industrious men and women of the North. Thirty-four went from Chicago alone, to act as teachers and matrons at Nashville, Helena, Natchez, and Vicksburg. In all of their work they received hearty cooperation from the Government, and free transportation for supplies was given the Commission by the railroads. The permanent white residents did not approve of these white teachers for the

9. Report of the Northwestern Freedman's Aid Commission, (Chicago, 1865).

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colored people and were often malicious and cruel to them. By 1865, the Commission had sent one hundred and eighteen workers out, who, in 1863, had access to 113,500 freed people, and in 1865, had some 750,000 colored people to care for.[10] By 1865, the Commission had 191 local auxiliaries supporting it and its receipts for the year ending March 31, 1865, had been $75,346.01 of which $28,132.77 had been spent for Schools and Teachers, and $29,334.42 for physical relief.[11]

The American Missionary Society was early in the field to relieve the conditions of the fugitive slaves, and in September, 1861, had opened a school for them at Fortress Monroe. In 1863, between two and three thousand colored refugees were huddled togather on President's Island at Memphis, most of them, women and children in the most destitute condition, but uncomplaining because they preferred "death with freedom to a return to slavery." Miss Eliza Mitchell came here to help with the work, she secured a tent and had it set up here and took under her care all homeless orphan children she found. Later, she was given one of the best houses on the Island for her home

10. Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Northwestern Freedman's Aid Commission. (Chicago, 1864), pp. 7 - 17.
11. The Chicago Tribune. April 14, 1865.

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and she became Superintendent of an Orphanage in which her fifty children did the housework, cared for a garden, and developed into an Industrial Home. From this time on the American Missionary Society and the Freedman's Aid Commission worked together to increase and improve the schools.[12]

Some of the schools established were those of : Miss Moore, in the Teacher's Home at Helena in which there was school work, Bible classes and prayer meetings; at Vicksburg, Miss Hibbard, Mrs. Edwards, and Miss Burnell of the Northwestern Freedsman's Aid Society had charge of a school of some two hundred and fifty pupils in the Presbyterian church, while in the basement of the Methodist Church in the same town three hundred pupils were handled in three departments by Misses Stubbs, Dickey, Hansen, and Hunt, and another school was conducted in the United Presbyterian Church by Misses Glasgow, Gibbon, and Hammond. A Teacher's Home was established in Vicksburg and Miss Pardee was matron there.[13]

One of the best orphanages was that established at Natchez. A large, convenient home was secured for it,

12. John Eaton. Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen, (New York, 1907), p. 202.
13. Freedmen's Aid Commission Bulletin, (Chicago, 1865), p. 99.

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Mrs. Edgerton of Chicago was made matron and soon nearly one hundred helpless little colored children were housed here, Miss Nettleton, of Rockford, Illinois, was put in charge of the school room, and maintained a cheery and wholesome order. Miss Belding was housekeeper. The girls were trained to knit and sew and the older girls were trained in housewifery. At Natchez also, an Industrial school was opened and superintended by Mrs. Johnson.[14]

In the work at Cairo, Miss Emily C. Austin was very important. She secured a building for a temporary home for the colored refugees, fitted up and furnished a school house, secured the erection of a chapel and with the help of Surgeon Hardy, conducted a women's ward of the Freedmen's Hospital. The medical attention given to the Freedmen was closely allied with the school work. In the year 1864, in the Mississippi Valley, medical attention was given to 6929 colored patients by the Commission agents and surgeons.[15]

The work for the Freedmen did much to break up the racial dislike of the northern whites for the black people.

14. Freedmen's Aid Commission Bulletin, (Chicago, 1865), p. 100.
15. Ibid., p. 97.

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In December, from the 20th to the 24th, a Fair was held in Chicago, at Bryan Hall, for the Benefit of the Northwestern Freedmen's Aid Commission. The Chicago Tribune says of this Fair, "The mountains of prejudice are so far broken down that the movement has received the hearty support of patriots throughout the West, and although many difficulties were encountered, a glorious result has ensued from the labors of the pioneers in the work." In the Fair, Detroit was represented in a table showing battle-field relics, the Ottawa table contained fancy goods, dinners were served and refreshment stands opened by the Chicago women. The extent of interest in the Fair was shown in that the Insane Asylum of Michigan had a table of fancy goods valued at sixty dollars. The Directors acknowledged the receipts of the Fair at $9,813.62.[16]

The desire to improve the conditions of the Freedmen was not held by the white people of the North alone. In September, 1864, the colored people of Chicago formed a "Colored Freedmen's Aid Society" to aid the suffering Freedmen women and children who were at Qunicey.[17]

16. The Chicago Tribune, December 19, 1864.
17. Ibid., September 29, 1864.

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Chapter X

Army Correspondence.

In the Civil War, a decided effort was made to keep the soldier in close touch with his home. Wives, mothers and lovers were urged to write to their boys and to tell them to persevere in the good work that they were doing, they were urged to encourage the men to go into the army and thus do their patriotic duty to the country. And as the soldiers went, and the women bravely took up the work left for them they "were proud to write what those at the hearth-stone were doing for those who tended the camp fires, and the men were happy and cheery to acknowledge the support they received from this home sympathy. The immense correspondence between the army and the homes, prodigious beyond belief as it was, some regiments sending home a thousand letters a week, and receiving as many back; the constant transmission to the men of newspapers, full of the records of home-work and army news, produced a homogeneousness of feeling between the soldiers and the citizens, which kept the men in the field, civilians, and

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made the people at home, of both sexes, half-soldiers.[1]

Most of the letters sent were those which denoted real affection on the part of the women, and were encouraging to the tired men who received them, and a great number of letters were from mothers, so that the name mother became that dearest to the soldiers, and the one used most frequently by them in delirium. But many letters were not as patriotic and as thoughtful. One of Colonel Logan's soldiers came to him one day with the following letter which he had just received from his wife:

"My dear Sol:

For God's sake do come home. I am sick. There is nothing in the house to live on. I can't do a darn thing with the children. The cows got out, and ate up the garden, and everything has gone to the devil and you just have to come.

Yours loving wife,

Amanda.

Colonel Logan was amused by the letter and he said, "Now, Sol, you know I can not grant you a leave. You know that the reasons your wife gives for wanting you to come would look badly if I sent them up to Headquarters. Besides, we

1. Lucius Pierpont Brockett & Mrs. Mary C. Vaughn. Women's Work in the Civil War, (Boston, 1867), p. 64.

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are likely to be ordered to the front any day, and you would hate to have it said that you were absent from the regiment." Sol replied, "Now John, do you really think there is any chance for a fight?" Colonel Logan assured him that there was, and Sol said, "Then no furlough for me."[2]

Chaplain B. F. Cary said that nothing demoralized the soldiers more quickly than the thought that no one cared for them. It made them indifferent, slovenly, and reckless. So he asked those at home to write to them of the ordinary things at home. One of his soldiers said to him, "I feel better now, Chaplain, I have a letter from my wife; Come in and see her photograph, Chaplain, I think she is pretty good looking," and his eyes suddenly moistened. A German soldier said to him, "Chaplain, mine vife write so good, it make me feel right so in my heart; she tell me she pray for me, and I must be good soldier, and de childer is vell, and she never complains any tings, all good mit her," and the tears flowed down the brave Teuton's face.[3]

Many of the letters sent contained some little remembrance from home or a gift. In an Article on writing

2. Mrs. John A. Logan. Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife, (New York, 1913), p. 108.
3. The Northwestern Christian Advocate. May 11, 1864.

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to the soldiers published in the July, 1862, number of Hall's Journal of Health , women were urged to put a bit of tea or capsicum (red pepper) in their letters; that the soldiers could drink the tea to invigorate them and rub the capsicum in their eyes to keep them awake when on duty. Wallace P. Benson, in his diary tells of receiving letters from home which contained a comb, another a picture of "Pa."

Through the columns of the daily newspapers an "Army Correspondence Mania" developed. Daily, every paper contained a number of advertisements of soldiers wanting to start correspondence with young ladies or of young ladies seeking the same with soldiers. One of these advertisements in the Chicago Tribune of May 14, 1863, read: "Wanted - Correspondence. Two old soldiers, but young in years, passably good-looking, with a liberal education, desire a correspondence with two or more young ladies, with necessary accomplishments, with a view to love and its consequences. Must be handsome, and of good disposition. Wealth no objection. Photograph enclosed. Address with real name, R. Ranger and Gay Rover - General Palmer's Escort. Murfreesboro."[4] Frequently a score or more of such notices

4. The Chicago Tribune. May 14, 1863.

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appeared daily. One soldier wrote that he received one hundred letters within a week in reply to his notice.

E. V. Wilson of the 39th regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers criticized this type of correspondence severely and justly: "We officers and soldiers of the army, need and deserve the sympathy and council of our wives, mothers, sisters and lady acquanitances from the dear homes we have left behind. From these, letters are always acceptable, are read with deep interest" but he says that the anonymous letters are received with derision. " They are handed out to corporal, sergeant, private or maybe to a negro servant and their tender effusions, gushing but flowing platitudes " are used to the disadvantage and injury of the ladies who wrote them. In some cases, probably a real friendship did develop through this type of correspondence.[5]

One interesting way in which the woman at home kept in touch with the boys at the front, was through the things sent through the Sanitary Commission. Very rarely was a box opened at the Commission rooms which did not contain notes pinned to the goods, and these notes were more often used to develop an interesting friendship and end in marriage than

5. The Chicago Tribune, August 8, 1864.

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the correspondence started through the newspapers. One note pinned to a pair of socks read, "Dear Soldier, - If these socks had language they would tell you that many a kind wish for you has been knit into them, and many a tear for you has bedewed them. We all think of you and want to do everything we can for you; for we feel that we owe you unlimited love and gratitude and that you deserve the very best at our hands." Another letter describes the girl writing, and asks the soldier to write to her, adding in a P.S., "If the recipient of these socks has a wife, will he please exchange socks with some poor fellow not so fortunate?"[6] Many of these letters ended with a prayer: "The Lord reward you for your noble efforts in behalf of, and kindness to, our brave soldiers. God bless them, and crown their efforts with success," or, "May God save our country in its peril."[7]

6. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 135.
7. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 153.

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Chapter XI

Women Soldiers.

At a flag-raising at North Plato, Kane County, in June, 1861, opportunity was offered for enlistments to fill up the Company. Not a man went up. This aroused the patriotism and dander of the school mistress who walked forward and headed the muster roll, she was followed by another lady. The muster roll was sent to headquarters and accepted by the powers, and Mary and May, the soldier girls, dressed in uniforms of red, white and blue, attended four flag-raisings of Kane County, marching as pioneers at the head of their Company. Much of the success of the recruiting service at the patriotism of Kane was attributed to the gallant conduct and bright eyes of these young ladies.[1]

Young girls throughout the country were not content to merely urge their men to join. There is no record of the number of girls who actually enlisted and served in the army

1. The Chicago Tribune, June 19, 1861.

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as regular soldiers. Mrs. Livermore thought there were probably more than four hundred women in the army. In July, 1861, the 19th Illinois, regiment was enroute to Missouri, when the Captain of Company F. heard that one of his command was one who should belong only to the home guard. "John," a smooth-faced stripling was ordered to advance and was told that reasons of sex made it necessary that Company F. should lose her from its messes. John held out stoutly, denied the charges and even produced a letter from his mother, which later was found to have been stolen. The Captain took away her musket and John owned up and left camp. She was taken to the police court on Saturday and her father, Mr. Olson, claimed her and took her home.[2] Another young lady from Chicago, under the name of Frank Miller, enlisted with her brother in the 65th Home Guards and served for three months without discovery. She later enlisted in the 90th Illinois, was a prisoner near Chattanooga, where she received an offer from Jefferson Davis to join the Rebels. Although he offered her considerable money she refused to turn to his side.[3]

There were a number of women whose husbands were

2. The Chicago Tribune, July 14, 1861.
3. Ibid., March 25, 1864.

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officers and some wives of private soldiers who accompanied or followed the army to the front. Some of these women were of great help as nurses in the hospitals, camps and on the battlefields. Others were a hindrance and a bother to their husbands and to the army. Peter Smith after being at Washington is convinced that it would be a good military movement to send the wives of the officers home. "I don't know, though, but I might add, send home the wife of every army officer in Washington. It is too bad that there should be a necessity for this, but our officers are away from their regiments altogether too much, particularly when their wives are living in Washington. There is something about calico that causes men to neglect their duties - what it is, I don't know. Wherever you go in Washington army officers abound, at the hotels, theatres, saloons, concerts etc., they make up four-fifths of the crowd. The men have to forego all this pleasure and the officers ought to be willing to do the same. So I say, send the women home and let them go to work knitting mittens for the soldiers. (Don't let Mrs. Smith see this)."[4]

Madame Turchin, wife of the Colonel of the 19th Illinois regiment went with her husband to the battlefield. She was

4. Illinois Journal, December 18, 1861.

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the daughter of a Russian officer and had lived near or with the army all her life. She was foreign in appearance, fine looking and popular with the men of her husband's regiment. They came to her with their illnesses and troubles and she treated them with kindness, playful badinage and careful nursing as suited the needs of the case. In Tennessee, in the spring of 1862, Colonel Turchin became ill and for several days was carried in an ambulance. Madame Turchin nursed her husband and also took command of the regiment and was accorded unquestioned obedience from the men. She led the troops into action and fought bravely at their head, then upon her husband's recovery she turned to the care of the sick and wounded in the hospitals. When the Colonel was court martialed unjustly, in an attempt to drive him from the army, Madame Turchin went to Washington and obtained an order to set aside the court martial and also a promotion of her husband to Brigadier-General.[5] Reverend A. H. Conant, Chaplain of the 19th Illinois, in a letter to his wife, August 20, 1861, says of Mrs. Turchin, "With all the refinement of a lady, she has the energy and self-reliance of a man; she feels able to

5. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 15.

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take charge of herself, carried a nice little revolver and dagger in her belt, and has a dignity and bearing that secures respect from the roughest soldier."[6]

During the war only two women were commissioned Major, one an actress, Pauline Cushman, who was a Union spy, the other the wife of Lieutenant Reynolds of Company A. 17th Illinois regiment, of Peoria. This regiment took part in the campaigns of Fredericktown, Missouri, Cape Girardeau, Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Pittsburg Landing. Mrs. Reynolds went with her husband and shared with him a soldier's fare in camp, sleeping in the open air many nights, frequently drenched with rain and exhibiting a heroism that endeared her to the men of the 17th. She was present at the battle of Pittsburg Landing, attending to the wants of as many of the wounded and dying soldiers as she could. Governor Yates hearing of her heroic conduct here, commissioned her Daughter of the Regiment, with the rank of Major.[7]

Not all of the women felt that their work would be of the greatest value with the army, but the majority saw the need of carrying on as much as possible the ordinary work

6. Hanaford. Women of the Century, p. 172.
7. Illinois Journal, April 30, 1862.

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at home and thus eliminate the irritability which the war naturally produced. When the war broke out Mr. and Mrs. U. S. Grant and their four children were living at Galena, Illinois. Mrs. Grant was of a southern family and having been reared in a southern State was a very strong Democrat. She hoped that Grant would become a Democrat, but when he would not, she went over to the Republicans. Mr. Grant was made Colonel of the 21st Infantry Volunteer regiment, in May, 1861. Mrs. Grant remained at home with her family, the same unaffected, sincere, devoted wife and mother, and friend to those at home, with only occasional visits to her husband in the field. When friends questioned her in regard to her ambition for Grant, she said, "Mr. Grant has succeeded below and when he was called to his position, he thought it was his duty to try what he could do." When asked if she thought Grant would take Richmond she replied, "Well, I don't know. I think he may - Mr. Grant always was a very obstinate man."[8]

A very different type of loyalty to the Union is that exhibited by a lady at the Union meeting of the people of Coles and adjacent counties at Charleston, Illinois, on

8. Frazar Kirkland. A Book of Anecdotes of the Rebellion, (Hartford, Conn., 1866), p. 554.

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July 31st, 1863. Here an "individual of the copperhead order, while cheering for some of the leaders of the rebellion, received a timely and well merited rebuke in the form of a blow on the nose with an umbrella in the hands of a worthy and patriotic lady." This act was well known at the time and the soldiers in Hospital number 1, Louisville, Kentucky, moved to purchase and forward to her an appropriate present to express their admiration of her heroism.[9]

The first lady of the land, Mary Todd Lincoln, was another Illinois woman. She visited the hospitals in and around Washington, at the height of the war there were twenty-one of these. She liked to collect and distribute luxuries and comforts among the men who had suffered from the casualties of war. She was never a leader in the Woman's Work in the war, and she was very severely criticized and ridiculed for her conduct of social affairs at the White House. In a prodding manner, Mrs. Lincoln looked after the physical welfare of Lincoln, and probably dominated him in little things, but as a companion and aid to him in the problems of carrying on the war, she was a failure.[10] She says of Lincoln," Mr. Lincoln was mild in

9. The Chicago Tribune, August 27, 1863.
10. William E. Barton. Life of Lincoln, 2 Vols., (Indianapolis, 1925), II, p. 413.

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his manners but he was a terribly firm man when he set his foot down. None of us, no man or woman, could rule him after he had once fully made up his mind." Mrs. Lincoln, nevertheless, had her own opinions of the war and its leaders. When asked what she thought of McClellan, she said, "He is a humbug . .. . He talks so much and does so little." Of Grant, she said, "He is a butcher, and is not fit to be the head of an army. . . . . He has no management, no regard for life. . . . I could fight an army as well myself." Lincoln calmly replied, "Well, Mother, supposing that we give you command of the army. No doubt you would do much better than any General that has been tried."[11]

The most outstanding of all the women who worked with the army and still carried on important work at home, was Marie Logan, the wife of John A. Logan. Amid the suspense, anxiety, and wretchedness of the first uncertain days after the seizure of the forts in Charleston Harbor, Mr. and Mrs. Logan went to their home at Marion, Illinois. Mrs. Logan's sympathies were divided, as were those of many people in Illinois, between loyalty to the Union and love of their old southern homes, and their southern relatives. One of

11. Gamaliel Bradford. Wives, (New York, 1925), p. 42.

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Mrs. Logan's brothers joined the Confederate army. So when Mr. Logan was called to Washington, his wife answered the questions of her neighbors and tried to keep the people loyal to the Union. Upon his return from Washington, Mr. Logan spoke to the people at Marion, telling them he was going to enroll, and asking them to do so also. At once Sander, the six-foot-four fifer of his Mexican War regiment strode up to enlist and he was followed by Cox, the drummer of the Mexican War. With Mr. Logan they led the march to the Square, and one hundred and ten men enrolled for three year's, or during the war.[12] While the 31st Illinois Infantry was being organized, Mrs. Logan acted as Aid-de-camp for her husband. Since Marion was off the Railroad Line, all dispatches to and from the Governor, and the Adjutant-General of the State, had to be taken to and received from Carbondale. Mrs. Logan made these trips for her husband, alone, during the day, and attended only by Willie Chew, a village lad, at night.[13]

After the troops left Mrs. Logan's first problem was to make her money cover the needs before her. Mr. Logan's pay in the army was small and uncertain, and the demands

12. Logan. Reminiscences of a Soldiers' Wife, p. 99.
13. Logan. The Part taken by Women, p. 7.

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for relief of soldiers' families were great. So Marie Logan became a cultivator of the land and raised wheat, corn, and cotton on their small farm, and afterwards took the produce to market herself, so as not to have any of it undersold. Her greatest worries were for her husband. She soon moved to Carbondale so that she could be in closer touch with the army. Mail was received here daily, a part of the time, and letters were received three times a week. Mrs. Logan soon became an informant for the wives as to where their husband's were located and how they were.[14]

Mrs. Logan also worked with the army. While she was with Logan at Cairo, measles broke out in the 31st Company, and over five hundred of the men contracted the disease. Logan took over the City Hotel for a hospital, but this had no equipment for caring for five hundred sick men, so Mrs. Logan volunteered to go the sixty miles to Marion, and Carbondale to get supplies from the people there. Captain Edwin S. McCook forgot to get a pass for Mrs. Logan to permit her to go north. The train was ready to go and finally Mrs. Logan found Donahue, one of the guards on the train to be a friend of hers, and he let her on the train without her pass. She arrived at home and within thirty-

14. Logan. The Part taken by Women, pp. 7 - 8.

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six hours had collected a carload of blankets, pillows, linen, jellies, wines, and everything necessary for the hospital.[15]

After the fall of Fort Donelson, Colonel John A. Logan was reported as among those killed. Mrs. Logan immediately went to Cairo, and here learned that her husband was not killed, but had been severely wounded. She went to Headquarters, but the Colonel in command refused to give her a pass due to "military necessity." Mrs. Logan, heart-broken, said she trusted, "if the exigencies of the service should ever send him to the front, and he should be so unfortunate as to suffer any of the fatalities of war, a military necessity would prevent Mrs. Graham from going to him." He replied savagely, "Thank you, madam, there is no Mrs. Graham" and Mrs. Logan retorted, "If there was one intended, I hope she died in infancy." Upon returning to her hotel Mrs. Logan learned that Governor Yates of Illinois and Governor Morton of Indiana were going to charter steamers to go to the battle-field to bring back the remains of many of the Illinois and Indiana boys who had been killed and to bring back such of the wounded soldiers as they could.

15. Logan. Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife, p. 109.

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They assured Mrs. Logan that she might go with either of them.[16]

Upon arriving at the front, Mrs. Logan finds her husband and Colonel Ransom being cared for at Grant's headquarters, so she acts as nurse for both of these men. After recovering, Logan goes to Murfreesboro, and later with the 17th army corp to Memphis, where Mrs. Logan again joins him. For a time here Logan was unable to leave his bed and Mrs. Logan acted "as amanuensis and messenger for him, taking his orders to headquarters' tent on the grounds of the Lanier place." One day on her way to Lanier's she found Colonel Shotbrock's clerk, Crutchfield, bound to a tree because of his continual drunkenness. She talks to Crutchfield, and after getting him to promise to quit drinking, she cuts the ropes. She explains it to the Colonel, and feels justified in her actions because Crutchfield keeps his promise to her.[17]

At the Lanier place at Memphis, was the wife of Colonel Sloane of the 24th Illinois. "She was one of those women who are always interfering with, and crossing, the members of her husband's regiment." Mrs. Logan and Major Hoover, went to visit some cousins of Logan's who were staying out from

16. Logan. Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife, p. 123.
17. Ibid., p. 132.

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Memphis some distance. Although a very poor horse-woman, Mrs. Sloane insisted on going along, so Mrs. Logan and the Major plotted to give her the livliest horse and take her through the worst mud, with the result that she was greatly dishevelled and finally thrown off in the mud. This served to dampen her ardor somewhat, and later furnished material for regaling Hoover's staff.[18]

After Vicksburg, Mrs. Logan, Logan and his staff, returned to Illinois to try to arouse feeling in favor of the Emancipation Proclamation. At Carbondale, many picnics, excursions, balls, and parties were held in his honor, and Logan spoke as all of these. When they left to return to battle, one or two ladies of Carbondale were engaged to officers of his staff.[19]

During the winter after Vicksburg, conditions among the soldiers' families and the refugee contrabands were pathetic. Mrs. Logan and the women did what they could for them although their efforts were not always appreciated. One old woman, who with her father and daughter was suffering from cold and lack of food asked for, "A little terbacker" and these Illinois women almost agreed with their member who said, "they ought to let her die!" The condition of the

18. Logan. Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife, p. 135.
19. Ibid., p. 142.

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black refugees was worse than that of the whites, due to their timidity and extreme destitution. Mrs. Logan and her companion, Mary E. Tuthill, however, blessed the day when they came to Illinois, because they took over the work of feeding, currying, and caring for the animals which these women had been doing. Many of the neighbors objected to Mrs. Logan keeping a negro to work for her, and even resolved that she should not be allowed to keep the "niggar" but he did stay.

Among the refugees, there was much sickness and no nurses to take care of it, and many deaths, with no undertakers to bury them, so Mrs. Logan added this work to that which she was already doing. One November day she helped a grandfather bury his grandchild by conducting the burial ceremony, lowering the body into the grave, and then filling in the grave. The father of the child was in the army. Upon returning home with the old man the mother was found dying, and after her death, Mrs. Logan prepared her body for burial.[20]

When the army entered Atlanta, Lincoln asked Logan to return to Illinois to help secure the State to the Republican party in the elections of 1864. Before Logan's

20. Logan. Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife, pp. 151 - 153.

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return there was considerable debate as to what stand he would take politically. A brother-in-law of his was so sure he would support McClellan, that he offered to bet a fine span of mules he owned against five hundred dollars. Mrs. Logan said, "All right, Mr. Campbell, I will take your bet, since you are so confident." Men around proffered the money if Mrs. Logan lost, and promised to see that she got the mules if she won. Logan was greatly amused by the bet. He made his first speech at Carbondale and closed it with a glowing appeal for Mr. Lincoln's re-election. There was scarcely a dry eye among the thousands of listeners. At once a rush was made to the barn, the mules were hitched to a carriage, and Logan was driven around to his home. The story of Mrs. Logan and the mules went all over the country and for several months Logan canvassed for Lincoln driving these mules.[21]

With the close of the war, Carbondale had a grand welcoming for General Logan, and for weeks his home was a "hostelry for the accomodation of visitors." During these post-war activities John A. Logan, Junior, was born on July 24, 1865.

After a visit to the graves of the soldiers at

21. Logan. Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife, p. 173.

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Washington in February, 1868, Mrs. Logan suggested to her husband, who was at that time Commander-in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, that there should be annual decoration of the graves of the loyal deceased. Mr. Logan issues the order for the Decoration Day.

On the occasion of the dedication of the Logan Post at Boston, Whittier gives a glowing tribute to Mrs. Logan:

> "What shall I say of her who by the side
> Of loyal Logan walked in love and pride,
> Whose faith and courage gave a double power
> To his strong arm in freedom's darkest hour?
> Save that her name and his shall always stand
> Honored alike throughout a grateful land."[22]

22. Logan. The Part Taken by Women, p. 11.

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Chapter XII

Nurses.

At many of the first war meetings held in April, 1861, there were women who offered their services as nurses. At first most of the nurses sent were men, but women proved so much more successful that a large part of the work was given over to them. Some of the nurses went in the service and in the pay-roll of the United States Army, others as nurses sent by the State, and others, in the employ of one of the three Commissions functioning in Illinois. Many others, simply went from their homes to do whatever they saw was necessary without any authority and with no pay. Of these women, very few were trained nurses, a considerable number were mothers who took care of the soldiers as they would have cared for their sick children, and many of the soldiers regarded this care , as that from a dear mother, sister, or wife.

In May, 1861, Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, appointed Miss Dorothy L. Dix, to aid in organizing military hospitals, and aid the chief surgeon by supplying nurses and

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substantial means for the comfort and relief of suffering.[1] Surgeon-General William A. Hammond, issued an order that in the general hospitals there should be one woman nurse for every twenty beds; he later changed this to one woman for every thirty beds; and no nurse was to be employed without a certificate from Miss Dix or her agents, except in an emergency.

In the circulars which Miss Dix issued, she set forth the following requirements for the nurses, "No woman under thirty years need apply to serve in Government hospitals. All nurses are required to be very plain-looking women. Their dresses must be brown or black, with no bows, no curls, or jewelry, and no hoop-skirts."[2] Miss Dix requested the women who offered to give free service as volunteer nurses, that they take some practical instruction in nursing and then report to her through the physicians or surgeons of the town, so that they might be able to report for work at an hour's notice.[3]

Applications to go as nurses came in from women of all conditions, ages, and qualifications. One said, "I pray you send me," another, "I am anxious, very anxious, to have you assist me in obtaining a situation as nurse in the

1. Illinois Journal, May 15, 1861.
2. Mary A. Gardner Holland. Our Army Nurses, (Boston, 1895), p. 19.
3. Illinois Journal. May 15, 1861.

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Government hospitals. . . . . My first husband was scalped and shot by a Missouri rebel or ruffian, in 1856. My last one lost his life at the battle of Fort Donelson in 1862. He never received one cent of money while in the United States service, and I never have received any from the Government since his decease. Now I must be up and doing good deeds for our country. I have too much patriotism in my soul to keep still any longer."[4] Many, however, shrank from going as a nurse, because the cry of, "It is no place for women" was loud. The pay of the army nurses was only twelve dollars a month and many nurses turned this in to the hospital funds for the purchase of necessaries and delicacies for the sick. The duties of an efficient nurse were not administering a spoonful of wine, nor bathing an officer's temple with a sponge, but combing out matted hair, washing dirty faces, hands and feet, binding up putrid wounds and a number of things that cannot be described. It was a noble sight to see the ladies of nobility and education, and accustomed to wealth, wait on the unfortunate often repulsive privates, forgetful of disordered hair, hoopless, often soiled calico, seeking only to help the needy. Those in authority discouraged young ladies going into the work as a romantic venture, because only those who

4. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 166.

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could bear fatigue and feel that the sense of accomplishment were sufficient reward, could dare to venture into the work of nurses.[5]

The women nurses often found their work more difficult because the surgeons-in-charge, and the ward masters were jealous of all outside assistance, so that every woman who wanted to succeed had to have a patience and adaptiveness of which not more than one woman out of ten would be capable. No one woman succeeded in rendering years of hospital service who was not an exceptional person. At Mound City, the Doctors were prejudiced against the Protestant nurses. They said, "You Protestant nurses are always finding some mare's nest or other that they can't let alone. They all write for the papers and the story finds its way into print and directly we are in hot water. Now the Sisters never see anything they ought not to see, nor hear anything they ought not to hear, and they never write for the papers, and the result is we get along very comfortably with them."[6]

The Government outlined the duties of the nurses: the "directress of female nurses" should oversee the marking and distributing of clean clothes, the linen room and its appurtenances, the issue of delicacies for the sick, and

5. Illinois Journal, May 28, 1862.
6. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 224.

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extra diet kitchen for their preparation. The remaining female nurses should care for the cleanliness of persons, and prepare extra diets and such other care as the medical officer should direct. One nurse also might be employed to mend and care for the clothing etc., in the linen room. "Women employed in this capacity should be intelligent, industrious, and of irreproachable character. Female nurses may be discharged by the officer if incompetent or unfit."[7]

In June, 1861, Miss Dix appointed Mrs. P. E. Yates, of Chicago, as presiding matron of the military hospital at Cairo. She, with the approval of Miss Dix, appointed as her assistants: Jane A. Babcock, Miss L. Saymaker, Teresa Zummer, Mary E. Babcock, and Ada Miller. Shortly after their arrival at Camp Defiance, Cairo, Mrs. Yates writes to the Editor of the Tribune,"We have been very cordially received by everyone here, and those physicians who were opposed to ladies as nurses, when we came here, are now the first to welcome our visits and acknowledge the amount of good we are doing. And in one instance, one of them has ever asserted that he believed the life of one interesting young man was saved by the good nursing of one of our ladies.

7. Manual for Camp and Hospital, Pub. by Western Sanitary Commission, St. Louis, 1862, p. 73.

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We find our duties very arduous, but I hope we shall have the health and strength given us to perform all that is so necessary to be done."[8]

Chicago organized and sent many groups of nurses to the hospitals. Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Livermore, of the Northwest Sanitary Commission, were authorized by Miss Dix to appoint nurses for the West. A Chicago Protestant Female Nurses' Association was formed early in 1862, to work with the Commission in securing nurses. Reverend E. B. Tuttle, city missionary at the Chicago Protestant Episcopal Church, organized a corp of christian women as nurses, who under Chaplain Swift offered their services to Governor Yates.[9]

It would be impossible in a work of this sort to try to give in detail, the work of the Illinois women who went as nurses. A few of them will be treated briefly, and in subsequent chapters we will take up the work of Mrs. Bickerdyke and Mrs. Porter.

When the War started, Mary J. Safford was living at Cairo, and with the coming of the troops and the early engagements here, there was great need for hospitals. Miss Safford immediately began relief work here, if not the first woman in the Union to begin it, she was the first woman of

8. The Chicago Tribune, June 14, 1861.
9. Ibid., April 30, 1861.

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the West. She found the hospitals run with no system, knowledge or means. She systematized the work and with the aid of a wealthy brother furnished the necessities when they could be obtained in no other way. Surgeons and officers everywhere opposed her work, but she sweetly continued on her way, a little lady of petite form, gentle and loving face. After the battle of Belmont, she was the first woman to go to the field. With her handkerchief tied to a stick, waving above her head as a flag of truce, she went out to minister to the wounded whose sufferings were aggravated by a keen wintry wind. Every day she packed baskets with articles of sick diet, and with a memorandum book visited the hospital to give special food to those needing it, take notes to write letters for the boys, or list special articles which they might want. As she passed through the hospitals the faces of the soldiers brightened. In her educated, tender voice she spoke German to a boy from Holland, French to a French soldier, and supplied food for the sick as the surgeon had ordered. For one man she brought material to make horse-shoe nails so that he might work while recovering from an amputated limb; for another she brought tools that he might do wood-carving, and for others, paper, pencils, Atlantic Monthly, Chicago Tribune, checkers, needles, jack-knife, or whatever she had promised.

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With her visiting done she hurried away to market, cook and prepare her supplies for the next day.

On Christmas Day, 1861, when there were some twenty-five regiments stationed at Cairo, Miss Safford visited all of the camps and presented to every sick soldier some little useful present or token. She was called by all of the soldiers the "Cairo Angel." One soldier who had been moved from one of the miserable regimental hospitals at Cairo to the Mound City Hospital said, "I'm taken care of here a heap better than I was at Cairo; but I'd rather be there than here, for the sake of seeing that little gal that used to come in every day to see us. I tell you what, she's an angel, if there is any."

Miss Safford threw herself into the work with such energy and self-forgetfulness, that she broke down before the end of the second year. Her friends sent her to Europe.. She aided the Italian women in relief work during the war, and later returned to the United States, studied medicine and graduated from Medical College in New York, studied again at Zurich and Vienna, and became Professor of the Boston University School of Medicine.[10]

10. Livermore. My Story of the War, pp. 206 - 215.

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Mrs. Edgerton was at the head of the nurses sent to Paducah. She had been a nurse at the Chicago Home for the Friendless. Elmira Fifield, of Chicago, was one of the few women who had a thorough medical education. She had attended medical school in the East. Her skill, ability, and faithfulness caused the surgeon to assign her a ward of severely wounded patients. She had toiled for a year without rest, when the malarious atmosphere, and over-exertion caused her death. She was brought back to Chicago in a burial casket. The three Robb sisters gave their lives to the work also; one died at her post, and was buried at Milliken's Bend in sight of the camp where she had worked. The three sisters were sent out from Chicago to southern hospitals, leaving their brave, pious, little Scotch mother to carry on her relief work at Camp Douglas. The first two sisters came back to Chicago within a year, worn pallid and feeble.[11]

A nurse, Margaret Hayes, who was known as "Sister Maggie" to the soldiers in the hospital at Memphis, Tennessee, left Mendota, Illinois, in February, 1863. She was commissioned by Mrs. Livermore, supplied with a lunch, a pillow, and a small comfortable, and started on her way to

11. Andreas. History of Chicago, II, p. 317.

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Tennessee. Here she cared for two wards of soldiers in the Adams General Hospital, and so endeared herself to the soldiers that, when she was sent to another hospital, they presented her with a gold watch.[12]

At Quincey, in October, and November, 1861, the hospitals were visited by a local woman, Miss Louisa Maertz. Here she brought delicacies for the sick, procured redress of any grievance the soldiers suffered, wrote letters, dressed wounds and even took some of the soldiers to her own home for more careful nursing. In the fall of 1862, she was commisioned as a nurse and sent to Helena, Arkansas, where every church and many private houses had been turned into hospitals, to care for the army of the South-west. During the fall and winter of that year she was almost the only female nurse in Helena hospitals. She went from one building to another, even when the mud was so bad the streets were practically impassable, taking sanitary stores, preparing food and nursing the soldiers. She was always cheerful and kind, going about in the military camp with such gentleness, strength, and purity of character, that all rudeness of speech ceased in her presence, and as she went from room to room she was received with silent benedictions

12. Logan. The Part Taken by Women, p. 334.

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or an audible, "God bless you, dear lady" from some poor sufferer. One poor soldier she cared for at Helena, was so ill that after several weeks Miss Maertz knew he could not recover. She sent word to his wife who lived sixty miles in the interior of Arkansas. The poor woman who was practically blind, walked all the way to Helena, and arrived only shortly before her husband's death. Miss Maertz looked after the funeral, cared for the widow, and secured a place for her at the Refugee Home at St. Louis. From Helena, Miss Maertz went to Vicksburg, and then after a short rest to New Orleans, where she worked until the close of the war.[13]

From Griggsville, Illinois, Mrs. Lucy E. Starr came to offer her services as nurse. She was sent by the Western Sanitary Commission to the Fifth Street Hospital in St. Louis, and in 1863, was made matron of the Soldiers' Home at Memphis. The Superintendent in his final report says, "Her mission has been full of trials and discouragements, yet she has patiently and uncomplainingly struggled through them all; and during my frequent absences she has cheerfully assumed the entire responsibility of the Home." After the Home was closed, Mrs. Starr, under the Freedmen's Aid

13. Brockett., and Vaughn. Women's Work in the Civil War, pp. 391 - 394.

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Commission of Cincinnati, worked with the refugees and freedmen at Memphis.[14]

Among the soldiers' wives who acted as nurses, was, Mrs. Rebecca S. Smith of Chelsea, Illinois, whose work at Post Hospital of Benton Barracks was so excellent, that the surgeon asked for her services in his ward. Mrs. Caroline E. Gray was also at Benton Barracks. Another nurse here was, Miss Adeline A. Lane of Quincey, who had given up teaching school to care for the sick and wounded.[15]

The conduct of many of the female protestant nurses was such as to bring discredit on the entire professional sisterhood, the Chicago Tribune said, and it expressed the desire that the Protestants might organize a corp of nurses similar to that of the Catholics, so that the surgeons might have more opportunity to judge of their character.[16]

The work of the Catholic Sisters as nurses is not as well known as that of the Commission nurses. There were in all, four Sisterhoods, participating in relief work. The Archbishop at first strongly objected to the Sisters going, but later his blessing and best wishes went with

14. Brockett and Vaughn. Women's Work in the Civil War, pp. 729 - 730.
15. Ibid., 739.
16. The Chicago Tribune. March 23, 1862.

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them. The Sisters of Mercy of Chicago were one of the important Orders in this work. Mother Carrol tells of their work thus: "When the Civil War broke out, Mother Francis organized among the Sisters a band of volunteer nurses to minister to the sick and wounded on the southern battlefields. She accompanied them to Missouri and set them to work. In Chicago, she looked after the soldiers, whether sick or prisoners." Another Sister wrote of Mother Francis, "Many soldiers crying out in agony on their hard beds, blessed her as she passed her holy hands over their burning brows. . . . . A Southern lad of eighteen, cried like a child when she laid her hand on his clammy brow. 'Oh God,'he murmured, 'I thot you were my mother.' She prepared him for death and he died in her arms." Mother Francis was a power in the prisons and hospitals when the most influential gentlemen and committees were refused admission. Once when Secretary Stanton refused to supply more rations during a certain month, the Sisters of Mercy appealed to President Lincoln who wrote, "To all whom it may concern: On application of the Sisters of Mercy in Chicago,of the Military Hospital in Washington, furnish such provisions as they desire to purchase and charge the same to the War Department."[17] Before leaving Chicago,

17. George Barton. Angels of the Battlefield,(Philadelphia, 1897), pp. 173 - 174.

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Colonel Mulligan, whose "Irish Brigade" was composed almost entirely of Catholics, called on Reverend Mother Francis, to obtain a promise from her that the suffering among his soldiers might be cared for by her children.

The Sisters of Charity at Chicago, had sent so many of their members to the camps that when an appeal for aid came in June, 1862, there was no possibility of complying with the request without injuring the school, so the school was closed, the house shut up and the entire sisterhood went to the troops to administer comfort and consolation to the wounded and dying.[13]

When the Sisters of Mercy went to the Jefferson City Hospital, they found the soldiers in a wretched condition, with a hospital recently established, inefficiently equipped and the convalescing soldiers the only nurses. No women of Religious Orders had ever before been seen here, and they were met with a very cold reception, which soon changed to appreciation and gratitude as the Sisters ministered to the soldiers. The Sisters attended mass every morning when the hospital duties permitted, but except in the case of Catholics, their ministration was confined to the bodily ills of the sick; even with Catholics, they rarely touched

13. The Chicago Tribune, June 21, 1862.

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on religious subjects, save when the patient desired it.[19]

The night before the Sisters left Jefferson City, the Military Band serenaded them. They went to St. Louis and there were given charge of the nursing on the steamboat "Empress" which was bringing the wounded soldiers from Shiloh to the hospitals of the North. Work of this sort became known as work in "Floating Hospitals." Medical Director, Dr. Simmons, suggested this plan as a means of bringing sick soldiers from the southern battlefields back to the North where they would recover more rapidly in the climate, and surroundings of home. The idea was adopted by several organizations. The Government purchased, or chartered, and organized several steamers. Each one was supplied with a kitchen in charge of female nurses, surgeons, an apothecary, and male and female nurses. The hospital supplies, furniture, and delicacies were mostly provided by the Sanitary Commission. Beside the Sisters, Miss Troller of Bloomington, was important in the work on Floating Hospitals.

The "Empress" reached Pittsburg Landing on Palm Sunday. The next day, with a load of over three hundred sufferers,

19. Barton. Angels of the Battlefield, pp. 186 - 193.

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the trip to Keokuk, Iowa, started. The Sisters were employed from early morning until midnight, waiting on the sick and trying to soothe their depressed spirits. They reached Keokuk so that the Sisters received mass and Sacraments with the Sisters of Notre Dame on Easter Sunday. For five weeks they worked on the hospital boats, going from Pittsburg Landing and Louisville to the North.

The Sister's work in nursing was probably the most expert of all of the women who went, but public work of this sort was also most unusual for them. They always felt that they owed special tribute to the brave men of both armies, for the defense and courtesy which they invariably received from both Confederate and Federal armies.[20]

20. Barton. Angels of the Battlefield, p. 195.

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Chapter XIII

Mother Bickerdyke and Mrs. Porter.

Among the hundreds of women engaged in the Civil War, Mother Bickerdyke was preeminent. There were others as self-sacrificing, and as consecrated, but she was unique in method, extraordinary in executive ability, enthusiastic in devotion and indomitable in will. She gave herself to work for the ordinary soldiers, and there was no peril she would not dare for them. An officer in Memphis said of her, "That homely figure, clad in calico, wrapped in a shawl, and surmounted with a 'Shaker' bonnet is more to this army than the Madonna to a Catholic!" Every soldier saluted her as she passed and if at leisure, relieved her of her burden and bore it to its destination.

Mrs. Bickerdyke was born in Ohio, July 19, 1817. Her early life had been one of poverty. At the age of twenty-five, she married a widower, who had four or five children. When the war broke out, Mrs. Bickerdyke was a widow, living in Galesburg. There was so much sickness among the troops at Cairo, that the ladies of Galesburg, sent Mrs. Bickerdyke

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to Cairo to help. Upon her arrival there, she found Mary Safford at work, and these two women, with the help of the Cairo people, systematized the work of the camps and hospitals.[1]

Mrs. Bickerdyke worked with the army from June 9, 1861, until March 20, 1865. Her first experience in a battle was that of Fort Donelson. The night of the battle was fearful, it became darker and darker, and the horror of the guns of the day hung over the camp. About midnight, an officer saw a light moving about among the dead on the battlefield. He dispatched a soldier to investigate, and the soldier reported that Mrs. Bickerdyke was out with a lantern examining the bodies of the men to be sure that no living man should be left amid such surroundings. Her ministrations that night were received by many rebel sufferers who had been deserted by their confederate brothers. Mrs. Bickerdyke said of her work at Donelson, "the saddest thing in my experience was receiving their last messages, and little treasures to be sent home to their families when death came to relieve them from pain. Such cries as, 'What will become of my children?' were the hardest of all to bear." Mrs. Bickerdyke had such an independent

1. Livermore. My Story of the War, pp. 474 - 476.

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disposition, and was so strong and vivacious, that very few realized how deeply the incidents of her work moved her.[2]

One of the problems of the hospital was, the disposition to be made of soiled linen and clothing. When the hospital at Savanna was breaking up, and the order had been given to prepare everything to leave, Mrs. Bickerdyke saw a huge pile of soiled clothing in the main hospital, sanitary shirts and drawers, blankets, and sheets, which were evidently prepared for destruction. She asked the officers what was to be done with these soiled garments and they replied, "They are to be burned." Mother Bickerdyke exclaimed, " Burned! These goods that belong to us and that wives and mothers of the boys have worked so hard to send!" The officer tried to explain to her that that was all that could be done with them, and received this answer, "I'll show you, sir, that they can be washed. Don't touch them until you hear from me!" She went to the officers, received a detail of seven men, and on Monday with men, teams, barrels, and kettles, turned the Hospital yard into a laundry. This was repeated Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, but with new relays of men each day, for Mrs. Bickerdyke, without forgetting any of her hospital duties, kept very vigorous

2. Holland. Our Army Nurses, p. 516.

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supervision of the workers. The clothing was all washed, dried, folded and boxed ready to send by the end of the week.[3]

At Corinth, Mrs. Bickerdyke set up a laundry in the woods, about two miles from camp and hired relays of negroes to wash and return the garments to the hospital. The number of articles washed here was immense, and meant a great saving to the Sanitary Commission, for all such material had been burnt up to the time Mrs. Bickerdyke established the Laundries. In one day the articles restored to usefulness at Corinth, were: 1532 sheets, 600 towels, 32 blankets, 6 pairs pants, 22 feather pillows emptied and washed, 478 pillow cases, 400 handkerchiefs and napkins, 70 bedsocks, 200 shirts, 130 pairs socks, 80 quilts, 5 blouses and 175 pairs of drawers. Mrs. Bickerdyke supervised all of this work, riding out to the woods on a white horse.[4]

Mrs. Bickerdyke was very thrifty in her work in the camps. When camp broke up she carefully gathered up pans, cooking utensils, stoves, and any soiled clothing that had been thrown away. Of her own appearance, she was quite indifferent to its attractiveness, but was always neat and

3. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, pp. 72 - 73.
4. Ibid., p. 91.

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clean. Amid the flying sparks from open fires, her calico dress would often catch fire and was often full of holes. Some one asked her if she was not afraid of being burned, Oh! she replied, "my boys put me out." With her clothing in this condition she visited Chicago late in the summer of 1863. The ladies here replenished her wardrobe, and later sent her a box of nice clothing for her own use, some of the articles very expensive and rishly trimmed. She traded most of these with rebel women for eggs for the hospitals, but two of the most elaborate gowns she decided to take to Cairo to sell. On her way to Cairo, at a small town along the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, she found two soldiers who had been discharged from the hospitals before their wounds were healed. The exertion of travel had opened the wounds and the poor boys were lying in an old shanty bleeding, and hungry, and penniless. Mother Bickerdyke washed the wounds and bandaged them with strips from the bottom of her gowns. The soldiers were without shirts, so she put the gowns, ruffles, lace, and all on them, and told them if questioned in regard to their shirts, to say they had been in "Seceshville."[5]

For nearly six weeks Mrs. Bickerdyke was the only

5. Holland. Our Army Nurses, p. 530.

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woman working in the field hospital at Missionary Ridge. She had nearly two thousand very bad cases here and also had to face the extreme cold of the winter from November, 1863, to January, 1864. Huge log fires were made to warm the camp and hospital, and to cook for the soldiers. One bitterly cold night, the fuel was all gone, and there being no officer present, Mrs. Bickerdyke ordered the men to tear down the breast-works for logs for the fire. Thirteen ambulance loads of wounded men brought in with hardly one man who escaped amputation of frozen limbs. The next morning the officer in command made a show of arrest for the irregular proceedings. He said to Mother Bickerdyke, "Madame, consider yourself under arrest!" As Mrs. Bickerdyke flew past with hot bricks, and hot dishes, she replied, "All right, Major! I'm arrested! Only don't meddle with me till the weather moderates, for my men will freeze to death, if you do." [6]

There were many times when Mrs. Bickerdyke's interference with army officers upset the order, but brought needed relief to the soldiers. During the battle of Corinth a regiment was being hastened up to relieve the men at the front. It had marched all afternoon, and the officer refused to let

6. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 524.

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the men halt for rest or food. As they passed the hospital a strong voice cried, "Halt!", the soldiers obeyed. Immediately, attendants began to distribute soup and coffee, fill the canteens and supply each man with a loaf of bread. "Forward march!", came the order in a few minutes, and the men marched on with renewed courage to more than compensate for the time lost. Mrs. Bickerdyke, herself, had given the order to halt.[7]

When Mrs. Bickerdyke was matron at the Gayoso Hospital at Memphis, she found it a great "nuisance" to have to pay forty cents a gallon for "water, badly colored with milk," when she wanted real nourishing food for her soldiers. So she went to Illinois on a "Cow and Hen" mission. At Jacksonville, a farmer gave her one hundred chickens, and as Mother went on North to Milwaukee, others donated chickens or cows so that she procured the hundred cows and the one thousand chickens. These were sent South through Springfield. There they were put in charge of Mr. Chase, and Mrs. L. Tilton. Mr. Chase was alarmed as to what should be done with the cows, while waiting for Mrs. Bickerdyke to return. Mrs. Tilton hurried around and found enough needy soldiers' families willing to house and milk

7. Holland. Our Army Nurses, p. 528.

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the cows, to solve the problem of getting the cows through the capital city. At Memphis, a large island which the river did not overflow was used to pasture the cows, and keep the hens. Mrs. Bickerdyke was very fond of her cows, and so proud of them, that one day the soldiers invited her to a "Cow's Review." They stationed her on a rude elevated platform, and the cows, with their horns polished, their hoofs bleached, and their bodies well curried, were led past with the especial favorite decorated with little flags.[8]

At Fort Pickering, small pox broke out among the soldiers. The cases were cared for in a separate hospital but Doctors and nurses alike were afraid to work in the hospital. Upon visiting it, Dr. Irvin found nine bodies awaiting burial, and more were dying. He consulted with Mother Bickerdyke to see what could be done at the hospital. Although Dr. Irvin objected, Mother Bickerdyke went to the hospital, and after a few days had cleaned it up, and provided suitable care and food for the patients.[9]

All through the war, Mrs. Bickerdyke worked with no fear of any authorities. After the battle of Shiloh, when she had no Governmental recognition, an officer asked her

8. The Chicago Tribune, July 21, 1863.
9. Margaret B. Davis. Mother Bickerdyke, (San Francisco, 1886), p. 82.

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under what authority she worked. Mrs. Bickerdyke replied, with no hesitation, "I have received my authority from the Lord God Almighty; have you anything that ranks higher than that?" Mrs. Bickerdyke detected a surgeon in some questionable conduct, and the surgeon appealed to General Sherman. This sturdy old soldier replied, "My God, man, Mother Bickerdyke outranks everybody, even Lincoln. If you have run amuck of her, I advise you to get out quickly before she has you under arrest."[10]

Mrs. Bickerdyke was very exacting in securing, and issuing food in her hospitals. If the supplies ran out she took an ambulance and went out to forage for some; if the Sanitary Commission treasury was low, she appealed directly to the people for whatever she especially wanted, as in December, 1862, when she appealed to the people of Chicago for 1,000 pounds of codfish. In April, 1865, when the food supply at Alexandria was exhausted, she telegraphed to Reverend Bellows of New York for food. The telegram reached him when he was in church. He read it to his congregation, and by four o'clock they had chartered a car and filled it with food ready to ship to Mrs. Bickerdyke.

10. Logan. The Part Taken by Women, p. 306.

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The doctors and nurses of the hospitals were often accused of taking food and supplies intended for the soldiers. One day Mrs. Bickerdyke met a ward master in the hospital. She noticed that he was dressed in shirt, slippers, and socks which were labeled with the Sanitary stamp. She immediately dis-robed him, and with very few words made him see the necessity of saving the supplies for their intended use. About the same time, one of the Doctors of the hospital became quite ill. Mrs. Bickerdyke was not alarmed about him because she had discovered that her stewed fruit was disappearing too rapidly, and to find out who was guilty she had put some tartar emetic in a dish of stewed peaches.[11]

Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Bickerdyke accompanied Sherman's army on the Atlantic Campaign. Upon arriving at Washington they found the first of the Andersonville prisoners just returning. Mrs. Bickerdyke immediately set to work to aid them, and did not leave until the last of the Andersonville men were buried or able to go North. When Mrs. Bickerdyke entered Washington, she was met by Dorothy Dix and honored by all Washington, as very few women ever have been. The calico dress and sunbonnet she wore at the Grant review at

11. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 481.

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at Washington, was sold for $100 and preserved as a relic of the Rebellion, while Mrs. Bickerdyke used the $100 for hospital supplies.[12]

Mrs. Bickerdyke's own account of her services to the nation was, "I served in the great Civil War from January 9, 1861, to March 20, 1865. I did the work of one and tried to do it well. I was in nineteen hard-fought battles in the departments of the Ohio, Tennessee and Cumberland armies. Fort Donelson, February 15th, and 16th was the first battle of which I was an eye witness; Pittsburg Landing, April 6th and 7th, the second; Inka, September 20th the third; and Corinth October 3rd and 4th, the fourth."[13]

Very closely allied to Mrs. Bickerdyke in relief work was Mrs. Jeremiah Porter. She was such a contrast to Mrs. Bickerdyke that the two women complemented each other. Mrs. Bickerdyke was brusque, positive and energetic to the point of turbulence, while Mrs. Porter was gentle, mild, but noiselessly efficient, with a culture and social position which gave her ready access to work with officers. Mrs. Bickerdyke did not care about special work for the officers but was devoted to the rank and file, where with robust

12. Livermore. My Story of the War, p. 535.
13. Logan. The Part Taken by Women, p. 326.

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figure, she spoke with a strong, cheerful voice. Mrs. Porter, was slight in figure, with a pale complexion, dark eyes and hair, and her voice expressed accents of pity and sympathy so frequently that it became permanently low and plaintive, and she was called the "Angel of the Hospitals" by the soldiers.[14]

Reverend Jeremiah Porter was a minister, and with the war he enlisted as the Chaplain of Battery A. of the First Illinois Light Artillery. Mrs. Porter immediately gave of her time for the care of the soldiers. She secures and places nurses for Paducah, then returns to Chicago for more nurses which she takes to the Savannah hospitals. Here she meets Mrs. Bickerdyke and thereafter the two women are closely associated as agents of the Chicago Sanitary Commission. They labored always in sight of wounds, suffering, and blood; were often wet and cold and endured all manner of privations.

For ten months Mrs. Porter worked at Memphis. With the help of Doctor Andrews of Chicago, she opened a Diet kitchen here and made several trips to Chicago to keep it supplied. Some towns in Egypt, Hoylton, Richview, and others provided chickens, eggs and butter for the worst cases of

14. Davis. Mother Bickerdyke, p. 55.

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illness. During the spring at Memphis, Mrs. Porter's health was very poor, but she rode out to Shiloh, the camp of the negroes who worked on the fortifications of Fort Pickering, nearly every day. Here she gathered the mothers about her for prayer and instruction in house-keeping. She praised those who had washed their children's faces and distributed clothing to the needy from boxes received from the North. Mrs. Porter suggested starting a school at Shiloh for the colored children. Within a week the negroes had the school house ready and it was supplied with books sent from the North, and Miss M. Humphrey came from Chicago to act as teacher. "Grandpa", the patriarch of the settlement expressed his delight with the school to Mrs. Porter. "I'se waited long for dis yer day! I'se prayed dat my chil'n might read de bressed Book! I'se old now but de promise hab come." 15

Mrs. Porter proposed to Senator Homer of Wisconsin, the drafting of the petition to Lincoln to establish the State Hospital in Wisconsin and get to disabled soldiers sent north for care. Miss Harvey of Wisconsin went to Lincoln to carry out the scheme thus proposed.

15. Mary H. Porter. Eliza Chappell Porter, (Chicago, 1892), pp. 169 - 171.

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Mrs Mrs. Bickerdyke and Mrs. Porter worked together in South Carolina hospitals, and then on to Alexandria. A relation of two incidents will show the essential difference in their ministrations to the sick. In the hospitals, Mrs. Bickerdyke always had a complete change of bedding and linen every Saturday. "Here's a shirt for you," she would say cheerily to some poor sick fellow scarcely able to help himself. "Thank you, marm," comes feebly back. "You needn't thank me for it," responded Mrs. Bickerdyke, "these goods belong to the Commission; they are given by the wives and mothers of you boys; the Commission only sends them to you. Why, I dare say, that your mother, or some of your folks go to the aid society." "Yes, marm, my wife does; she writ me about it." "I knew it! I knew it all the time! There! " confidently shaking out the shirt; "I shouldn't wonder if your wife made that. There, now! Don't you feel better?"[16]

Mrs. Porter had a habit which shows her tenderness equally well. If any soldier in her care was approaching death, she would slip a handkerchief or some little token into his hand to send to his family as his "latest memento."[17]

16. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 113.
17. Ibid., p. 239.

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When scurvy was very bad at Huntsville, Mrs. Bickerdyke went north to speak to the people to secure vegetables needed. She told the people to "go to work." "It is a shame for you to live here in idleness and comfort, while the boys are dying for vegetables! Get together your potatoes and onions, and send them to the Sanitary Commission." The sensation caused by her blunt speeches was great, but success followed her appeals. Mrs. Porter mildly surprised at Mrs. Bickerdyke, asked, "Did you do that?" and Mrs. Bickerdyke replied, "Yes, I did, I made a fool of myself but I would do it again for the boys." At Huntsville, these two women sent the following affidavit to the Northwestern Sanitary Commission: "We hereby certify, that we have personally superintended the distribution of sanitary stores to the soldiers of the following regiments, and detachments in the field during the last two months" and they list forty-one detachments. In August, 1864, they left Huntsville and came North thinking that the work was done. Hereafter, Mrs. Porter did some of her most constructive war work.[18]

In October, the Sanitary Commission voted to send

18. Henshaw. Our Branch and Its Tributaries, p. 265.

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supplies in Mrs. Porter's care to the soldiers on the Mexican frontier. Mrs. and Mrs. Porter both went as delegates from the Christian and the Sanitary Commissions. Here at the Brownsville Post Hospital in Texas, Mrs. Porter was put in charge of the Light Diet Kitchen, and Miss Elizabeth Gary of Galesburg, Illinois, helped teach school for the colored soldiers. On December 11, Mr. Porter writes a report of their work: "Last night in our hospital prayer-meeting six colored men arose to request our prayers for them, forty having previously stood up to denote their trust in Christ. There is much religious interest among both white and colored troops. Mrs. Porter is managing the Light Diet Kitchens with great satisfaction to surgeons and patients. Many are greatly comforted by her means daily, and some attribute their convalesence to her care. Our stores: fruits, berries, butter, cheese, soda-crackers, etc., were most timely. Our reading matter affords great pleasure. Last Saturday evening, a soldier from Illinois, who seemed near death, sent for me. Hastening to his cot I found him very low, but his mind was very clear and he seemed resting in Christ. After I had read and prayed with him he wished me to sing,'I'm but a traveller here, Heaven is my home,'etc. As I am not a singer I went to our tent and asked Miss Gary to go with me and sing with the dying

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man. She did so. He wished several hymns sung. He selected: 'Oh for a closer walk with God!' He wished me to write to his parents, brothers and sisters, and bid them meet him in Heaven."[19]

The school at Brownsville was first held in a tent prepared for a dining-hall and place of worship, and was opened for colored soldiers. Since there was no Protestant school there, Mr. and Mrs. Porter opened a larger one to include the children of the town. A building was secured and on March 1, 1866, the school began with six scholars, all from one family, in a few days some Mexican children came in and by the end of four months the scholars numbered sixty, more than half of whom were from Spanish Catholic families. In April, the Commission closed the school and in June, Mrs. Porter returned to Chicago, the last of the Commission delegates to leave war Relief Work.[20]

19. Fourth Annual Report of the United States Christian Commission, Philadelphia, 1866, pp. 193 - 199.
20. Smith. Incidents of the United States Christian Commission, p. 474.

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Chapter XIV

Women in Industry.

Before the war there had been women in industry so that their entrance into offices and factories in the sixties, was not new, but it was greatly stimulated. As the men left and there were places to be filled, the women stepped into them so naturally that everyone accepted the fact and very little was said about it. The work was remunerative for the women and they needed the money, and wanted to help with work for the country, so they filled in wherever there was a need. At the opening of the war, it was estimated that about one-fourth of the manufacturing of the country was performed by women. Even then the cotton, woolen and paper mills, the manufacture of shoes and rubber was quite largely dependent on women. In Illinois, in 1860, there were 479 women in factories as compared with 22,489 men, but these women were employed in only 29 of the 138 different kinds of factories.[1] With the war, both the number of

1. United States Census, 1860, Vol. Population, p. 111.

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women employed, and the kinds of work in which they were engaged increased rapidly. There were more women in teaching, and in clerical work, and in charity and religion their opportunities and achievements seemed boundless. They were forging ahead in the professions, particularly in medicinal their education advanced, ultra-radicals were agitating for woman's rights, and some women even adopted the "American Custom" of short skirts.

In the North, in 1864, it was estimated that there were between two hundred and fifty and three hundred women physicians, regularly graduated from medical schools.[2] The Government employed many women in its clerical work. The work there was pleasant and the girls did the work well, the only complaint against them was, that there was too much talk among the clerks. In the Treasury Department there were about seven hundred female clerks, selected from almost all the States of the Union, who worked about six hours a day and received $710 a year.[3]

As the housewives and young girls took over the management of the households, and engaged in the occupations of the men, one of the most serious difficulties they had to encounter, was the scarcity and uncertain value of money.

2. Calhoun. A Social History of the American Family, p. 361.
3. The Chicago Tribune. March 21, 1865.

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Many of the officers and soldiers left home leaving notes and accounts behind them to be collected for the immediate support of their families. The value of these notes depended on the price of gold on the day the note was paid so that many wives who had notes made out for one hundred dollars would receive only forty-eight dollars when the note fell due. Farm Products could be exchanged at stores for "shin plaster", which might have another value at another store, or perhaps would not be accepted elsewhere. "Shin Plasters" were little pasteboard promises to pay five cents or ten cents on whatever amount of money was written on it. "It took more brains than the average woman had to spare from her other work and worries to untangle the ravelled skein of finance, so she submissively took what she could get and paid what she had to. And she had to pay many prices for a pound of sugar, or for a pound of coffee, if she did not use parched sweet potatoed or rye, flavored with a Gummy substance sold her as extract of coffee, as a substitute. Calico cost forty or fifty cents a yard and unbleached muslin was sold at the same price, while shoes, though indispensible, brought fabulous prices."[4]

4. Johns. Personal Recollections, pp. 155 - 156.

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The women of Cairo were employed by the Quartermaster of the troops who first went to Cairo, to make coats, pants, tents etc., which the army did not yet have. Soon, nearly three thousand women were sewing for the Government and thus supported their homes where otherwise they would have been in great need. In hiring the women, Quartermaster McKinstry gave preference to the wives and children of volunteers. These women were paid every Saturday night in species funds from three to five dollars.[5]

Another new field of work was opened for women by Delphine P. Baker. She was in Chicago when the war broke out and helped collect material for relief work, went to St. Louis and worked in the hospitals and then acted as an agent to collect supplies in the North and take them to the front. Her health was not equal to the strain of this work so in 1862, she returned to Chicago and decided to commence a literary enterprise. She announced the publication of the "National Banner" which was to be a monthly of sixteen pages, the profits of which were to go to the needs of volunteer soldiers. A few numbers of the magazine were published in Chicago, later in Washington, and then in New York. By that time Miss Baker's interests were all turned to the care

5. The Chicago Tribune, September 13, 1861.

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of the disabled soldiers, and she used the "National Bureau" as a means of presenting to the public the need of a National Home, and her publicity in the matter probably was important in getting Congress to pass the bill for the Home in 1865, and in purchasing a site for the Home at Point Lookout.[6]

A postmaster from Illinois was killed in the Union Army at Vicksburg. There was some competition for the position but President Lincoln endorsed the application of the deceased soldier's widow. In a letter to the Post Master General, Lincoln said, "Yesterday little endorsements of mine went to you in two cases of Postmasterships sought for widows whose husbands have fallen in the battles of this war. These cases occurring on the same day, brought me to reflect more attentively than I had before done as to what is fair from us here, in the dispensing of patronage toward the men who, by fighting our battles, bear the chief burden of saving our country. My conclusion is that, other claims and qualifications being equal, they have the better right, and this is especially applicable to the disabled soldiers and the deceased soldier's family."[7]

During the war the teaching force changed rapidly. For some years, women had been supplanting men in the work

6. Brockett and Vaughn. Women's Work in the Civil War, pp. 758 - 759.
7. Kirkland. A Book of Anecdotes of the Rebellion, p. 548.

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of the lower grades, in the cities, now this spread to smaller towns, and to the country, almost like a revolution. Men left the teaching profession to go to the army or to go into business, and better paying professions. In Illinois the increase in women teachers was four thousand. In 1860, there were 8,223 men and 6,485 women teachers, and in 1865, there were 6,170 men and 10,843 women, while the salary increase in Illinois for teachers for this same period was for the men from $28.82 to $38.89 per month, and for the women $18,80 to $24.89 per month. In a single year in Illinois one thousand men teachers left their positions. During this period the population in Illinois increased from 1,711,915 to 2,141,510, and the number of school children increased from 472,000 to 530,000. The increase in the number of school teachers was 2,500.[8]

"It was upon the farmer's family that the heaviest burden of labor sell. To the ordinary duties of a farmer's wife were now added the care of the stock as well as the planting and harvesting of crops." The Prairie Farmer, published in Chicago, offered its columns to women of the west as a medium for the exchange of experiences and letters

8. Fite. Social and Industrial Conditions in the North during the Civil War, (New York,1910), p. 246.

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of sympathy, advice, and condolence were freely exchanged. Many stories were told in the newspapers of the extraordinary prowess of the"female farmer." The Decatur Magnet of June 16, 1863, told a story thus: "There is, living near Argenta a young woman about nineteen years old, who takes the lead in agricultural labor; One of her brothers is in the army, the other has seen service but has been sent home a cripple and the father is also disabled; so she has gone into the field, and about three weeks ago covered one thousand and fifty hills of corn in five hours. She was dragging oats the last heard from."[9]

The willingness of the women to take up the work in the field was expressed in a poem written by a soldier's wife in 1861:

"Don't stop a moment to think, John,
Your country calls, then go;
Don't think of me or the children, John,
I'll care for them, you know.

Leave the corn on the stalks, John,
Potatoes in the hill;
And the pumpkins on the vines, John,
I'll gather them with a will.

So take your gun and go, John,
Take your gun and go,
For Ruth can drive the oxen, John,
And I can use the hoe."[10]

9. Johns. Personal Recollections, p. 153.
10. Goodrich. The Tribute Book, p. 461.

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As Mrs. Livermore travelled through Illinois and Iowa urging the establishment of Aid Societies, she found every man and boy pressed into service to help harvest the grain and women in the field, driving reapers, binding, shocking and loading the grain. At first she was rather displeased to see women thus employed, but as she watched them she saw that they were very skillful in their work and while they could not keep up with men, their work was done with more "precision and nicety"and with an "artistic"finish which that of the men did not have. In Iowa, she stopped by a field where a half dozen women and two men were working, because she was curious to see what these women were like. She walked over to a woman of about forty-five who was driving the reaper and commented on the fact that she was helping in the field. The woman with a pleasant, comely, although sun-burnt face, dressed in dark calico without hoops, strong shoes and a shaker bonnet, said, "Yes, ma'am, the men have all gone to the war, so that my man can't hire help, and I told my girls, we must turn to, and give him a lift with the harvesting."

"Have you sons in the army?"

"Yes, ma'am," and a shadow fell over the motherly face, all three of 'em 'listed, and Neddy, the youngest was killed at Stone River, the last day of last year. We've money

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enough to hire help if it could be had, and my man don't like me and the girls to be workin' out o'doors; but there don't seem no help for it now."

Mrs. Livermore talked with one of the daughters who had the sweet eyes and honest mouth of her mother. The daughter said, "We're willing to help out doors in these times. My three brothers are in the army, my cousins, and most of the men are used to hire - so that there's no help to be got but women's, and the crops must be got in, you know, all the same."

Without murmuring or complaint the women did the hard work of the field and amid all of this weary labor gave of their time to the manufacture of hospital supplies, which came, box after box, filled with shirts and drawers, dried apples and pickles, current wine and blackberry jam, to be forwarded to the poor fellows languishing in far-off Southern Hospitals. Mrs. Livermore said of these farmer women, "Many women have done virtuously but these excel them all!"[11]

Three things saved the harvests of the country; the work of the women in the fields, the use of labor-saving machinery, and the influx of new population. The population

11. Sanitary Commission Bulletins, (New York, 1864,) pp. 369 - 370.

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was increased by immigration of foreigners largely. During the five years of the war 45,000 European immigrants landing in New York, declared their intention of continuing their journey to Illinois; the land sales in Illinois show that many of them did come and established property ownership.[12] Illinois grew commercially and industrially, during the war. At first eighty-nine of the one hundred and ten Banks of the State were ruined, freight rates were so high that the losses by shipping were great, and the railroads were so congested by war shipments that they were unable to handle the heavy freights. But as prices constantly rose, and as freight rates lowered, the price of farm products stayed up longer and from 1863, on, their cash value was higher and a period of prosperity ensued.

The use of labor-saving machinery had begun when the war opened, but it was greatly extended during the struggle. As the farmer left his plow to shoulder a gun, his wife or ten year old boy mounted a two horse cultivator and tended two acres of corn to his father's one; as the farmer laid down the scythe for the sabre, his son mounted the reaper and did in a day what had taken his father ten days, and the

12. Fite. Social and Industrial Conditions in the North During the Civil War, p. 11.

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family operations were not seriously interrupted. There were twice as many mowers and reapers manufactured in 1864, as in 1862. The use of the horse-rake was rapidly extended. Harrows, grain-drills, corn planters, and steam threashers were put on the market. At all of the Agricultural Fairs the machinery exhibit was the chief attraction with the sewing machine exhibits only, to compare with them in popularity.[13]

The number of McCormick reapers built and sold in 1848, was 700. In 1858, there were 5,000 built and sold, and in 1868, this had risen to 8,000.[14]

Another invention which contributed much to the success of women's work was the sewing machine, invented by Elias Howe, and put on the market in 1849, one year after the McCormick reaper was put on the market. They developed together in the next decade, with the sewing machine gaining more rapidly than the reaper. The number of sewing machines put out practically doubled during the five years of the war, as it was found that it took fourteen hours and twenty minutes to make a man's shirt by hand, and one hour and sixteen minutes by machine; that drawers took four hours and six minutes by hand and twenty-eight minutes by machine, and

13. Quarterly Journal of Economics, pp. 259 - 272.
14. Fite. Social and Industrial Conditions in the North During the Civil War, p. 7.

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night-shirts by machine took one hour and seven minutes, and by hand ten hours and two minutes. So with the increased need of all of these garments for the army, the popularity and necessity of the sewing machines increased. In 1860, the Wheeler and Wilson Company made 25,000 machines; in 1864, they made 40,000. In the same years the out-put of the Singer Company increased from 13,000 to 23,000.[15]

Sewing was engaged in by many women as a means of supporting themselves and their families. Domestic work was more remunerative, but it placed those engaged in it on the same plane as the negro, and Irish servants, and the women preferred the easier, more pleasant work with its higher social rating, to the higher wages of the servants. So many women acted as seamstresses and tailors. Also many continued the usual genteel work of giving music lessons, acting as governess, and teaching art, while the work of servant girls, laundresses, cooks, chambermaids, was carried on by the huskier group of European immigrants.[16]

Of the group of women who did not have to work, the criticisms were very severe for their extravagence, their continued social gaiety and seeming indiference to the war.

15. Fite. Social and Industrial Conditions in the North During the Civil War, p. 90.
16. The Chicago Tribune. April,1861.

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The Southern women criticized them as cold and indifferent. The organized work attempted to bring all women into the relief work and thus get them to feel a responsibility in some type of woek, whether in the home, the Commission rooms, or the office or store.[17]

Of women's part in the successful conclusion of the Civil War, Mr. Henry W. Bellows, President of the United States Sanitary Commission said: "The time will surely come when the great uprising of the women of America, nay, their systematic organization and cooperation in a common work, will be regarded as the most marked social feature of the war, the most splendid achievement on record of spontaneous humanity, the brightest augery of perpetual peace and unity in our nation."[18]

17. The Chicago Tribune. May 30, 1863.
18. The United States Sanitary Commission Documents, New York, 1866.

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